

EDMONTON'S 100% INDEPENDENT NEWS & ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY


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VUEWEEKLY

SPRING STYLE

SPRING AHEAD TO PAGE 34 FOR OUR ANNUAL SPRING LOOK AT HOT SPRING FASHIONS FOR SPRING

FRONT: NEW ARENA / 5 ARTS: AGA / 26 MUSIC: TWILIGHT HOTEL / 59



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ON THE COVER



SPRING STYLE / 34

Parkas are packed away and long johns are long gone: it's time for *Vue's* annual look at the hottest in spring fashions.

ARTS



AGA SPRING SHOWS / 26

"The greatest thrill in *Projections* is to see the vernacular of consciousness manipulated to serve as a shared art experience." —Mary Christa O'Keefe, critic, on one of three new shows at the AGA.

FILM



JOE STRUMMER: THE FUTURE IS UNWRITTEN / 54

"Long after the first fires of punk burned out, after corporate co-opting and the transformation of punk rock into a marketing-friendly commodity, Strummer remained." —Josef Braun, critic, on the legacy of the Clash frontman.

MUSIC



TWILIGHT HOTEL / 59

"We met and we played around a campfire and in the middle of that very first song we were playing we knew this is exactly what was going to happen, that we were going to team up and that was going to be the beginning of the entire story." —Dave Quanbury, musician, on his initial meeting with romantic and musical partner Brandy Zdan.

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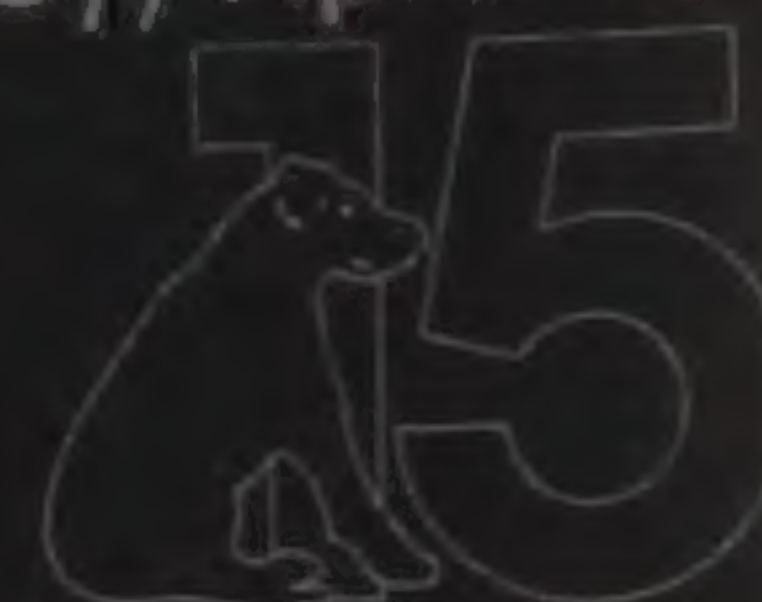
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Anyone who's been through an unsatisfactory 'first time buyer' experience ... being pressured to sign contracts, fighting for repairs or changes, waiting for weeks to have phone calls returned... knows just how important pre and post purchase service can be. Word is getting around fast that not only is Park Place straightforward and supportive up front, they're just as helpful in every phase of the relationship. They realize that becoming a homeowner is a big step and they work hard to make sure it's a happy, positive one. Existing Park Place homeowners often pop in to see what's new with the current projects. Referrals are probably the company's biggest source of new buyers.

A big part of the excitement for potential homeowners is keeping up-to-date with Park Place developments in order to pick the location they want and reserve their first choice so that they don't miss out. Perhaps it's no surprise that Park Place can't seem to build fast enough to accommodate all their requests. And it's quickly becoming clear why Park Place is among the top developers of new homes in Edmonton... and why they'll be around for a long, long time.

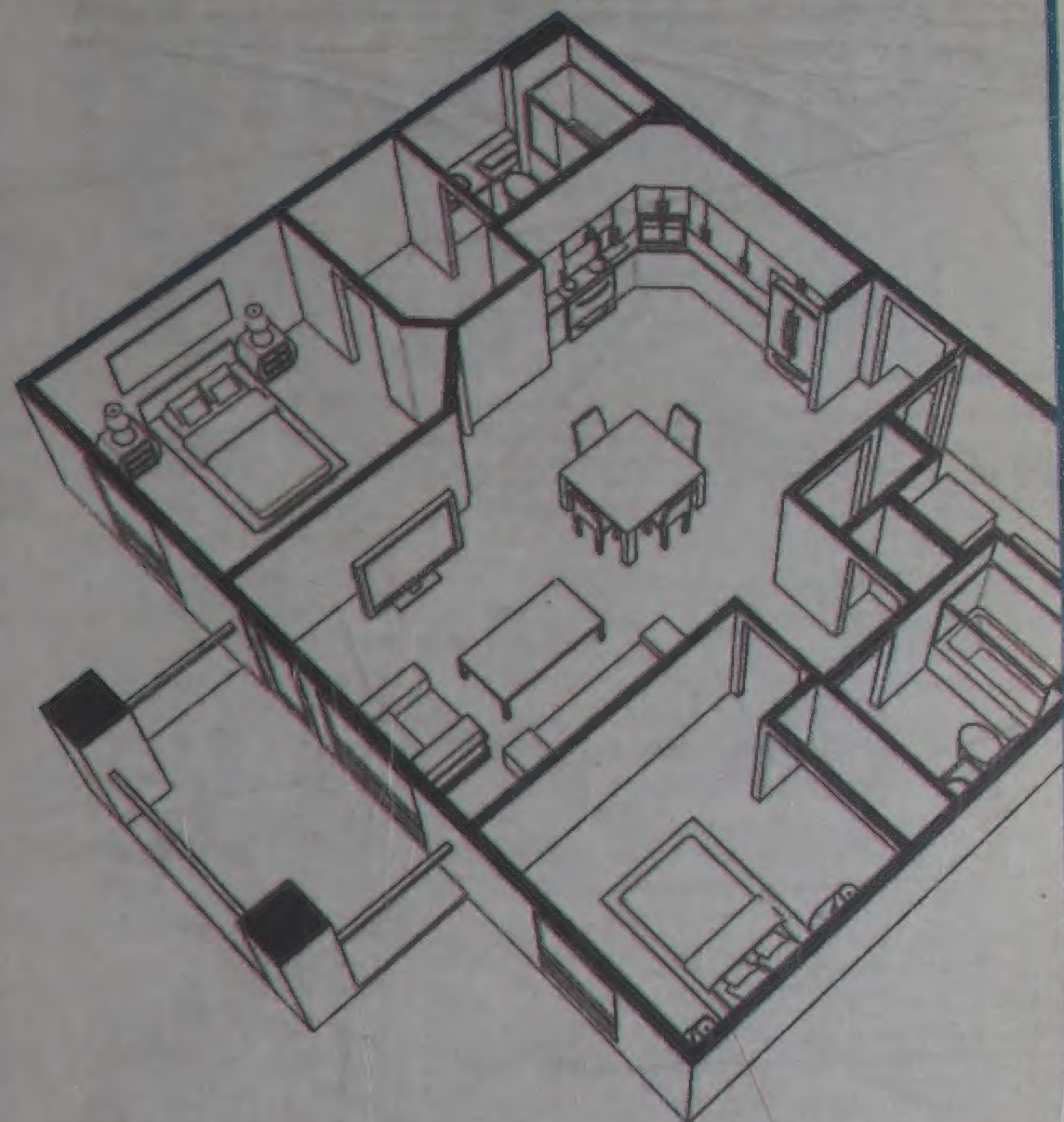
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P3 wasn't such a hot idea

SCOTT HARRIS / scott@vueweekly.com

From the better-late-than-never file comes the news that the city is set to scrap plans to build the long-awaited Southwest Community Recreation Centre (SWCRC) in Terwillegar by means of a public-private partnership (P3). City council voted 7-4 on Dec 18, 2007 to move ahead with plans to enter into an agreement with a private consortium to design, build, finance and operate the entire recreation facility and attached four-rink ice arena despite warnings from other municipalities, advocacy groups and unions about the track record of P3s, especially when it comes to building and operating recreational facilities.

A report on P3s released by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities just prior to council's decision concluded that there was no evidence to show that facilities built using the P3 model cost less or provide better services than facilities built using the traditional model and operated publicly, and also concluded that P3s "can reduce flexibility, transparency, and accountability for local governments."

In an interview with *Vue* prior to the decision, Jane Peatch, executive director of the Canadian Council for Public-Private Partnerships, admitted that estimates by proponents " ... start sometimes with an artificial number of what it's actually going to cost to build it [and] ... tend to over-inflate the revenue streams."

Now, just four months later, all the warnings seem to have come to pass. A source involved in the negotiations told the *Edmonton Journal* that the first statement made by the consortium was that they had erred on their estimate, and that the \$90-million facility could now cost up to \$130 million. The consortium also reportedly wanted to build two ice sheets instead of four and one pool rather than two. Of course, as is standard with P3 deals, councillors—to say nothing of Edmonton taxpayers—aren't allowed to see the details of the deal because it contains proprietary information.

Cost overruns, check. Inferior facilities, check. Secrecy and lack of accountability, check and check.

Given the zeal with which all levels of government are promoting P3s as a magic bullet for everything from roads to schools to hospitals, the SWCRC should serve as yet another cautionary tale to throw on the ever-expanding pile of evidence that flies in the face of the "public bad, private good" mantra that has been pushed for decades. Hopefully council will make the wise decision to build the facility publicly, and do it as soon as possible for the community which has been waiting for the facility for so long. ▼



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10303 - 108 Street, Edmonton, AB T5J 1L7

T: 780.426.1996 / F: 780.426.2889 / E: office@vueweekly.com / W: www.vueweekly.com

EDITOR AND PUBLISHER RON GARTH / ron@vueweekly.com
 NEWS EDITOR SCOTT HARRIS / scott@vueweekly.com
 ARTS / FILM EDITOR DAVID BERRY / david@vueweekly.com
 MUSIC EDITOR EDEN MUNRO / eden@vueweekly.com
 DISH EDITOR DAVID BERRY / david@vueweekly.com
 OUTDOOR ADVENTURE EDITOR JEREMY DERKSEN / snowzone@vueweekly.com
 ASSOCIATE MUSIC EDITOR BRYAN BIRTLES / bryan@vueweekly.com
 PRODUCTION MANAGER LYLE BELL / lyle@vueweekly.com
 PRODUCTION ASSISTANT MICHAEL SIEK / mike@vueweekly.com
 LAYOUT / DESIGN CHRIS BOSCHMAN / boschman@vueweekly.com

LISTINGS GLENYS SWITZER / glenys@vueweekly.com
 LOCAL ADVERTISING 426.1996 / advertising@vueweekly.com
 CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING 426.1996 / classifieds@vueweekly.com
 NATIONAL ADVERTISING DPS MEDIA / 416.413.9291
 SALES AND MARKETING MANAGER ROB LIGHTFOOT / rob@vueweekly.com
 ADMINISTRATION / DISTRIBUTION MIKE GARTH / michael@vueweekly.com
 ADMINISTRATION / PROMOTIONS AARON GETZ / aaron@vueweekly.com
 MEDIA ASSISTANT TREVOR KJORLIEN / trevor@vueweekly.com
 COVER PHOTO FRANCIS TETRAULT / blacklabphotography.com

CONTRIBUTORS Ricardo Acuña, Paul Blinov, Josef Braun, Rob Brezsky, Jonathan Busch, Gwynne Dyer, Jason Foster, Amy Fung, Brian Gibson, Hart Golbeck, Tamara Gorzalka, James Grisdal, Gen Handley, Jan Hostyn, Connie Howard, Ella Jameson, Ted Kerr, Keith Liggett, Omar Mousallem, Andrea Nemerson, Carolyn Nikodym, Alyssa Noel, Stephen Norley, Mary Christa O'Keefe, Roland Pemberton, TB Player, Bill Radford, Steven Sander, Marshall Watson, Ron Yamauchi, Dave Young, Darren Zenko

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MAIL LETTERS

WHOOAH! YOU'RE HALFWAY THERE ...

First of all, I would like to congratulate *Vue* on providing Edmonton readers with 100 per cent independent articles with lots of variety and local content. That said, I have a little problem with the recent cover story by David Berry ("Five years of war in Iraq have hit home in Edmonton," Mar 20 - Mar 26, 2008). While I see no problems with the first half of the article—heck, I've been saying a lot of the same for years!—it's the second half that bugs me.

The first sentence reads, "It is one of the more unfortunate ironies of the Iraq War that, even though Canada isn't involved, our soldiers have still been touched by it," but at no point is the direct connection between Iraq and Afghanistan explained.

Perhaps David Berry intended to mention that they're part of the "War of Terror" and therefore a part of the same conflict, or that the presence of US troops in Iraq leaves Canadians shouldering more of a burden in Afghanistan, but the lines between the two instead seem too blurred. I know this sounds like nit-picking, but making connections that aren't explained or lumping Iraq and Afghanistan together just seems a bit,

well, sloppy. Aside from that, keep up the good work and I will continue to read!

KATHY FORTIER

WATER CRISIS LIMITS DEVELOPMENT

I hate to take issue with Ricardo Acuña, with whom I agree on so many things, but his recommendation that the province make sure that bitumen upgrading takes place here in Alberta ("There's a bust coming to Alberta, but are we ready for it?" Mar 27 - Apr 2, 2008) flies in the face of what we know about the environmental impact of that industry.

Besides being very polluting in the good old sense of pouring toxic substances into the air, the industry is big on water use and on energy use, as well as being a major source of greenhouse gases. There is a lot of talk of placing these monsters northeast of Edmonton on the North Saskatchewan river, from which most of the enormous quantities of water required would be taken. It is clear that Alberta is heading toward a major water crisis in the coming decades, and we had better drop right away any plans for further industries that require lots of water.

I'm afraid Ricardo's piece reveals the inner contradiction now facing left progressive movements in this province and to a large extent around the world. Attempts to reduce the most environmentally destructive industries back to something the environment can sustain

will inevitably also reduce some of the most lucrative jobs open to ordinary working people, the very people from whom the left hopes for some support. Ricardo thinks the province could make up for reductions in jobs associated with bitumen extraction by opening up another environmental monster, this time in Edmonton's own backyard.

Let's get honest with working people: if they're working in the tar sands business in Alberta they are riding a hugely destructive bubble that may make them rich for a few years, but it's going to burst, and frankly the sooner it bursts the better.

MARTIN M. TWIBEDALE

Vue Weekly welcomes reader response, whether critical or complimentary. Send your opinion by mail (*Vue Weekly*, 10303 - 108 Street, Edmonton AB T5J 1L7), by fax (780.426.2889) or by email (letters@vueweekly.com). Preference is given to feedback about articles in *Vue Weekly*. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity.

CORRECTION

Due to a transcription error, last week's cover story ("The difference between a case of beer and child care," Apr 3 - Apr 9, 2008) stated that Blackwater provides contracted US border guard services. While other elements of border security have been privatized, border guards have not. We apologize for the error.

Councillor opposed, area businesses stoic at potential new downtown arena

GEN HANDLEY / gen@vucweekly.com

Although dwarfed by its massive neighbour, the Coliseum Inn stands solidly across the street from Rexall Place.

There's a somewhat somber mood in the hotel, but it's not the result of the recent report recommending a new downtown arena for the Oilers, but because the team's playoff hopes were put out the night before by our Calgary rivals.

"It was painful," says Salima Mawani, general manager of the Coliseum Inn. "It was definitely painful."

She straightens her Oilers sweatshirt as she sits down and shrugs. "But there's always next year right?"

In an area that seems to revolve around the 16 839-capacity venue that is home not only to the city's beloved hockey club but also hosts concerts and other major events, the reaction to the potential of a new arena is surprisingly relaxed.

Despite Rexall Place being a major source of business for the hotel, Mawani says she doesn't see recent developments as something that will shut her hotel's doors for good.

"We can't be solely dependent on the Oilers and events," says Mawani, who is part of an ownership group that bought the Coliseum Inn two-and-a-half years ago. "We're trying to expand our revenue base because we need to have the ability to bring people to our business without a hockey game across the street. It just makes business sense not to have all your eggs in one basket."

Last November the hotel renovated and renamed its restaurant the Safari Bar and Grill, and Mawani says they are trying to attract more corporate clients to the hotel.

Down the street at the Fireside Restaurant, owner Con Stavropoulos feels that while there will be some definite economic repercussions to the area, businesses will adapt and get through it.

"In 35 years, I've seen so many things change and sometimes change is a good thing," says Stavropoulos, who built his restaurant about eight months before the arena was constructed.

"Forty-two days of the year business is good. But that's only 42 good days. What about the rest of the time?" he asks, shrugging his shoulders. "No business can survive on just that."



NEWS ARENA

Sitting in his Oiler-adorned restaurant, Stavropoulos says he thinks the future facility will face some serious difficulties because a downtown location won't be as accessible as the current one.

AND THAT'S JUST how Tony Caterina, councillor for Ward 3, which includes the current Rexall site, feels as well.

"The facility is in the location that it should be in because all the infrastructure has been built around it," says Caterina, who thinks the arena should stay in its current location, either rebuilt or refurbished. "To start all over again and to rebuild all that infrastructure, it doesn't make any sense to me."

In addition to the road systems, LRT and parking already established, the councillor thinks the \$150 million Northlands expansion nearby makes it more logical to keep the

arena where it is.

Chairman of the Downtown Business Association (DBA) John Frederickson says that if it does come downtown, it's important that the facility is located in an area where it can benefit multiple businesses.

"It needs to go in an area or district of downtown that is multi-purpose," he says. "This complex can be the catalyst for further re-development. I think that's really key."

While no specific location has been proposed, Frederickson says three locations that are being looked at—land near the post office that is adjacent to Station Lands, land near the Baccarat Casino and land located near the Boston Pizza on 106 Street. All would be suitable spots because they are locations that could help the area.

But Caterina feels that if revitalization is the issue, areas other than just the downtown core must be considered.

"This came at a time when we're

CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE



City cyclists will soon rack 'em once again

SCOTT HARRIS / scott@vucweekly.com

Edmonton cyclists looking for a place to lock up their bikes will no longer need to search out parking meters, trees and fences, as the city begins to install new bike racks in the coming weeks to replace those removed from city streets almost 10 months ago.

"We have a big pile of new bike racks, which I'm pretty excited about," enthuses Claire Ellick, a transportation engineer with the City of Edmonton's sustainable transportation group. "Right now they're in one of our yards and maintenance is going to start installing them. It should be anytime now—within the next couple of weeks—that they'll start being installed."

Most of the bike racks in Edmonton disappeared in late June of 2007 after a decade-old contract between the city and a private company called Street Talk Inc, which provided racks in exchange for the right to advertise on them, expired and the company removed most of its 300 racks.

Ellick says that 150 of the new post-and-ring style racks will be installed first in priority areas, including Whyte Ave, Jasper Ave and 124 St. The city also purchased 65 of the old racks from Street Talk last summer, and those remain spread throughout the city. A second batch of racks, arriving in May, will be installed based on where the city receives requests for them.

SCOTT MCANSH, the vice-president of the Edmonton Bicycle Commuters, says he'll be relieved to finally see secure bicycle parking return to the city.

"It's great that we're finally getting bike racks again," he says, but adds that he's frustrated that it's taken so long to replace such important

NEWS BIKES

cycling infrastructure. "It clearly shows that bikes are a pretty low priority. The expenditure is negligible in the scale of the city's billion-dollar budget, so it seems incredible that it took that long to get the funding approved, to get them purchased and to get them in. I understand part of that was picking the right rack, but it obviously wasn't a high enough priority on the city's radar."

Ellick explains that the racks were initially slated to arrive in November but there were delays in materials purchasing. The total cost for the new racks is just over \$100 000.

She says that the new racks, which will accommodate one or two bikes each, were chosen in part because they take up less space on the sidewalk and in part because they will allow for a more even distribution.

"We looked at a couple of different styles and we went with a smaller footprint rather than a bulk rack that is going to be down the block or around the corner from where you're going and quite a distance away," she explains. "They'll be placed more destination-oriented, so a couple scattered down the block closer to where you might be going with good natural surveillance so you don't have to be too far away from your bike. It's a convenience we provide to motorists, so it's the same idea for cyclists."

It's a change that McAnsh applauds. "One thing that is nice about getting the new racks is that the old racks were kind of crappy in that it was thought that they could carry a lot of bikes so they were put pretty far apart. And they were awkward to lock your bike up to and unsightly." ▀

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REAR VUE MIRROR / SUN, APR 6 / CITY HALL History is never the result of one moment or one person. It is a collection of choices made by people doing what they think is right which results in something beyond them and bigger than they imagined. This was illustrated by the panelists of the *Vriend v Alberta: Dialogues with Delwin* event.

The event, co-sponsored by the U of A's Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services and Exposure: Edmonton's Queer Arts and Culture Festival, was an opportunity for people to hear the subtleties and human cost from those involved in the Supreme Court decision that ruled, 10 years ago last week, that sexual orientation should be protected in human rights legislation across Canada.

At the centre of the case was Alberta's accidental human rights hero Delwin Vriend, who in a spring-splendid fitted green dress shirt appeared vibrant and attractively introspective. For many of the more than 200 people in the audience, it was a moment at which Vriend the symbol became Delwin the person.

Eased into conversation by the intuitive skills of Paula Simons, columnist from the *Edmonton Journal*, Vriend discussed the experience of being, as Simons put it, "the most out man in Alberta," surrounded by the world of politics and the unrelenting eye of the media. Throughout the afternoon Vriend made it clear that at no time was the case—and all that surrounded it—ever a result of just his efforts.

Joining Vriend on stage was Lyle Kanee, lawyer at the time for the Canadian Jewish Congress, who supported the Vriend side of the case and out and proud Edmonton Police Commissioner Murray Billet, both of whom animated the era of the case and what has happened since through different perspectives.

Never turning into what could have been a back slapping anniversary party, the event was reminder of what can be done when people work together and how much work still needs to be done for human rights in Alberta. —TED KERR / ttd@vueweekly.com

ARENA

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

putting in millions for the revitalization of 118 Avenue, and Rexall is an anchor for the east," he argues.

Caterina says he was disappointed by the 38-page report because it finalized downtown as the arena location.

"My understanding was that the instructions were to come back and to look at three, four, five different sites including the existing location," says the councillor, sounding somewhat frustrated. "But that wasn't the case. They came back determined that downtown was the only viable site."

Jon Sand, general manager of downtown pub the Sherlock Holmes, says an increase in taxes would be

worth the increased business and revenue from an arena nearby.

"I can't speak for all this businesses down here but I personally wouldn't have a problem with it," Sand says. "Downtown is just now starting to become a destination again [and] the new arena would be the cherry on top of the sundae."

Regardless of the obvious benefits a new arena would bring to the area, Caterina says he needs to see some solid reasons to justify such a move.

"Until somebody can prove to me with facts and figures that it's a cheaper and better way to do it, I'm not going to change my mind," he says with certainty. "It's got to stay in the location it's in, and that's in Ward 3."

Even though they are sure to take

an economic hit when the hockey fans and concert-goers stop coming, Malawi and Stavropoulos are going to miss more than the consistent source of business.

"I'm an Oilers fan and it's awesome to walk across the street and go see a game," says Malawi, who has an autographed photo of Ales Hemksy on her desk. "I'm going to miss them personally."

Stavropoulos, who is close to his 40-year anniversary at that location, says he doesn't know if he'll even be there by the time a new arena is built.

"I've had season tickets every year but lately, I haven't been going because it's too much noise," he says with a smirk on his face, gesturing to his ears. "I'm telling you, I'm getting old." ▼

The Olympic torch fiasco

COMMENT

DYER STRAIGHT

GWYNNE DYER
gwynne@vueweekly.com

If I were the Chinese bureaucrat responsible for guarding the sacred Olympic Flame, the place I'd worry about most is Australia. It was there, just before the Melbourne Olympics in 1956, that a student pretending to be an Olympic athlete ran up to the mayor of Sydney and presented him with an "Olympic torch" consisting of burning underpants in a can nailed on top of a chair leg. He was gone before they realized it was not the real thing.

His intention was to mock this pathetic neo-pagan ceremony that was originally invented by the Nazis to spice up the 1936 Olympics in Berlin. The 1936 Olympics was Nazi Germany's coming-out party, so Hitler's people arranged for 3442 racially pure Aryan runners to do a relay race with an "Olympic torch" along the 3442-kilometre route from the Temple of Hera on Mount Olympus to the stadium in Berlin.

There had never been a torch connected with the original Olympic games in ancient Greece, and the revived Games got along without an international relay race just fine for 40 years before the Berlin Olympics of 1936—but if there was one thing the Nazis did well, it was propaganda. Leni Reifenstahl even made a documentary film about how the torch came from Athens to Berlin (and within five years Hitler's armies had occupied all the countries along the route).

This year's Olympic Games were supposed to be Communist China's coming-out-party, and the route is even more ambitious: twenty-one countries on all six inhabited continents. But that includes Australia, and I really wouldn't send the torch there if I wanted to preserve China's dignity. As England is the spiritual homeland of irony, so is Australia the world capital of mockery, and by the time the torch gets there (if it ever does) the Australians are going to feel challenged. It was burning underpants in 1956; what might it be in 2008?

The bar will have been set quite high by the time the torch reaches Canberra. After the propaganda triumphs for the "Free Tibet" movement in London, Paris and San Francisco, the rain of humiliations for the Chinese regime may ease off for a while (although I wouldn't guarantee the torch an easy ride in Buenos Aires, either). But after Dar es Salaam, Muscat and Islamabad, where they don't care much about Tibet, comes New Delhi, where some people care a great deal.

There will be a lot of Tibetans in New Delhi, so the run there, if it happens, may resemble a low-intensity war. Bangkok,

Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta may be quiet, but then comes Canberra, where Prime Minister Kevin Rudd has already said that the blue-track-suited Chinese thugs who have jogged alongside the torch-bearers in other countries to fend off protesters will not be allowed to operate.

IT HAS BECOME a nightmare for the poor, doomed Chinese bureaucrats who set this thing up: constant humiliations if they carry on with the planned route (which also goes through Tibet itself!) and utter humiliation if they cancel it.

For the moment, they are brazening it out. "The Olympic flame belongs to the people around the world," said Wang Hui, a spokesman for the Beijing Olympic organizing committee, "so the behaviour of a few separatists would not gain sympathy from people and will cause strong criticism and is doomed to fail." So far, though, I haven't been hearing much criticism.

Never mind the silly torch, and the equally bizarre three-layer cake that is the actual Olympics Games of today. (An international athletics competition on the bottom, an orgy of nationalist self-congratulation in the middle and a sickly-sweet pantomime of international love and brotherhood on the top.) What's actually colliding here are two irreconcilable views of the world.

For almost all Chinese, the turmoil in Tibet is a threat to national unity. Only in the past century have Tibet and the Turkish-speaking, Muslim province of Sinkiang come to be seen as a necessary part of that national unity, but they are now. Chinese propaganda insists that the local people support that consensus, but it makes no difference if they don't. They have to stay, because national unity is at stake.

For almost everybody else, China and Tibet is obviously a colonial relationship, and it's perfectly natural for the Tibetans to seek independence. They won't get it this time round, and they may never get it, but why would you be surprised that they try? Indeed, why wouldn't you support them?

Foreign governments will never support Tibet's independence, because they depend on China's trade and they value "stability" in China above all else. Foreign individuals are under no such constraints, and the interminable, multi-national Tour of the Torch is giving them a lot of opportunities to show their feelings. It isn't "anti-Chinese," just pro-Tibetan, but there will be much anger and many hurt feelings by the time this is done. ▼

Gwynne Dyer is a London-based independent journalist whose articles are published in 45 countries. His column appears each week in *Vue Weekly*.



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Adrenal exhaustion is real

HEALTH

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CONNIE HOWARD
health@vancouverweekly.com

To most, a diagnosis of adrenal exhaustion in a friend means little, or conjures up thoughts of psychosomatic tendencies, something a little flakey. But to those on the experiential end of the words, adrenal exhaustion is as real as an Edmonton winter. Manifesting as everything from profound fatigue (and sometimes contradicting insomnia), runaway allergies, recurring infections, anxiety, depression and dizziness on standing up, it can be not only as real as Edmonton winter, but as persistent.

Doctors who do recognize the problem as valid sometimes call it non-Addison's or sub-clinical adrenal insufficiency, capturing the essence of adrenal dysfunction that doesn't involve genetically or autoimmune-driven destruction of the adrenal cortex. And while Addison's disease affects about one in 100 000, adrenal fatigue affects many, many more of us.

Because there is no good medically recognized treatment for sub-clinically sputtering adrenals (pharmaceuticals such as cortisone meds come with the risk of further suppressing adrenal function and some pretty serious side effects), the condition affects sufferers in ways that go way beyond the symptoms slowing them down. For one, its not-well-known status makes it a little difficult to explain to employers and friends, and for many, any condition treatable with natural adrenal hormones, rest, nutrition, herbs, acupuncture, regular meals and joy (yes, enjoyment-raised endorphins can dramatically improve adrenal function) can't be all that serious.

But it is a serious condition, and has the potential to become completely debilitating. Normal levels of adrenal hormones are essential for keeping allergies and inflammation in check, immune function high and energy levels, blood sugars, sex hormones and mood normal—a pretty long list of high-level jobs, I'd say.

WHAT RUNS our batteries down more than

an overnight recharging will take care of, enough to make a normal workload (whatever normal is) very difficult or even impossible, is most often nothing more than modern life. While major physical or emotional trauma and abrupt discontinuation of cortisone medications are well-known triggers, accumulations of the ubiquitous lower-level chronic stresses such as chronic pain, overwork, sleep deprivation or relational misery play at least as big a role, and may best explain adrenal fatigue being possibly the most under-diagnosed health condition keeping us from functioning at full capacity. For women it is often in the years leading up to menopause, when the beginnings of adrenal fatigue are compounded by increased production demand as other sources of hormones begin to retire, that the condition makes an appearance too large to ignore.

The good news is that adrenal restoration programs sound very inviting to me. They include things like getting enough sleep and avoiding rigorous exercise, choosing calming ones such as yoga or tai chi or walking or swimming instead. Things like taking care of ourselves, limiting those things that deplete rather than energize. Things like surrounding ourselves with people that nurture us and make us laugh. Which is why I finally went on a vacation.

Healing also involves avoiding strict diet regimes (yay!) and eating well—eating low-glycemic, fatty-acid and protein-rich meals. Restorative herbs such as ginseng, licorice root, astragalus and schizandra can help immensely, and the no-nos, things like minimizing sweets, alcohol and strong stimulants, are really quite minor and in the long run very much worth the sacrifice.

Limiting things that deplete also involves limiting negative emotional influences. According to Christiane Northrup, labelling a negative emotion on recognition, and then consciously replacing it with positive nurturing memory or thought or activity has, when practiced faithfully, the power to increase blood levels of DHEA by 100 per cent within a month.

Did I already say that I totally understand why a non-sufferer might be suspicious of someone insisting on staying the course of their healing path? ▼

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MICHAEL
LEDWITH

The Order of the Phoenix: Peering into the world of Spirits

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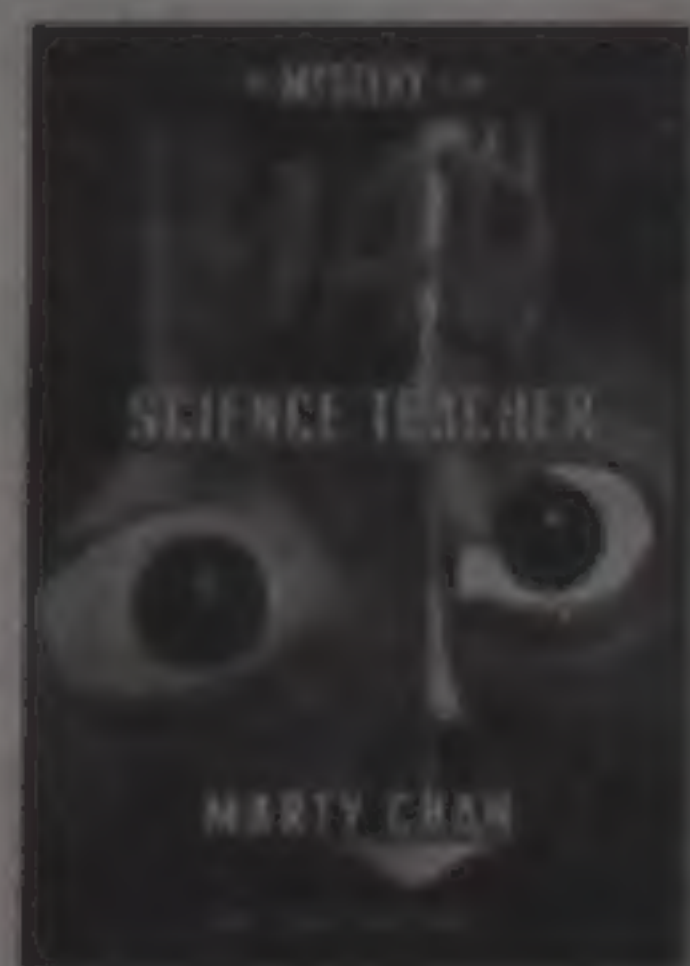
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Mandate letters are lame, but Renner's reveals Stelmach's view of environment

RICARDO ACUÑA / ualberta.ca/parkland

At the end of March, Premier Stelmach presented his new cabinet with their mandate letters. These are the letters, introduced by the Premier last year, which are meant to guide the work and priorities of the cabinet ministers for the next 12 months.

These mandate letters are also intended to provide Albertans with a way of measuring the government's performance at the end of the year by comparing what they said they would do with that they actually did.

This year's crop of letters contains few surprises. For the most part, they consist of either vague sentiments with no specific direction or of very specific short-term targets of little consequence.

Given the nature of these letters, it will be very easy for the premier to run down the list at the end of the year and give all his ministers check marks for having accomplished everything they were supposed to, regardless of whether they have done anything of consequence or not.

For example, Sustainable Resource Development Minister Ted Morton's mandate letter directs him to "Strengthen the competitiveness of the forestry sector by working with industry to identify options to improve the long-term viability of the sector." Although at first glance it looks like his mandate is to fix the forestry sector by the end of the year, a closer look at the mandate shows that all he really needs to do is ask industry to write up some options—he doesn't even have to act on them. He just has to identify them as options.

Likewise, Health Minister Ron Liepert is supposed to "increase the number of treatment beds for drug addictions and mental health services." Although this sounds like a great idea and a concrete goal, there is

no indication of how many more beds should be created, there is no requirement to ensure that beds meet demand or even a set percentage of demand, and there is no instruction as to where those beds will be, how they will be paid for and how they will be staffed. In other words, if a non-profit facility garners enough donations to open just one more treatment bed over the course of the next year, then the Health Minister will have met his mandate without having done anything at all.

PERHAPS the most interesting piece of all the mandate letters, however, is one which can be found in the letter to Environment Minister Rob Renner. Mr Renner has been mandated, among other things, to "[i]nform Albertans on our environmental stewardship to ensure a clear provincial, national and international understanding of Alberta's leadership, commitment and action on the environment."

This statement says more about the government's level of commitment to the environment than almost anything they have actually done in the last year. Mr Renner's mandate is not to ensure that Alberta become a world leader in environmental policy, nor is it ensure that the government demonstrate commitment and action on the environment. Instead, the environment minister is expected to lead a public relations campaign.

The clear message here is that Premier Stelmach has no interest in the environment whatsoever. If he did, he would be mandating his environment minister to improve the government's environmental policy and bring it into line with some of the best-in-class policies around the world. There is no shortage of areas for improvement that the minister could

focus on, including a plan which would actually reduce emissions and a cumulative effects assessment process which would at least meet its own guidelines.

This is generally referred to as greenwashing—investing money to convince people that you are green instead of actually investing money in being green. It's commonplace in the corporate sector, and particularly with energy companies trying to protect themselves from a public backlash against polluters, but it's quite disturbing to see a government doing it this openly.

Implicit in this mandate point is an acknowledgement by the government that a vast majority of Albertans want the government to take action on the environment and a recognition that Albertans are aware of the government's utter failure to do so. It is disturbing because it demonstrates the government's disregard for the public, and because it suggests that Albertans are naïve enough to fall for a slick media and public relations campaign in lieu of real action.

For the most part, when the Premier gives his ministers top marks next spring for having accomplished everything in their mandate letters, it will be meaningless, empty and a charade of accountability. If Minister Renner gets full marks, however, it will be a sad day. It will mean that the premier was right in his assumption that Albertans could be fooled by slick advertising over substance, and it will seriously hamper the possibility of genuine environmental progress in this province for a long time to come. ▽

Ricardo Acuña is executive director of the Parkland Institute, a non-partisan public policy research institute housed at the University of Alberta.

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TB and Dave's predictions

HOCKEY

IN THE BOX

DAVE YOUNG AND TB PLAYER
inthebox@vancouver.com

Playoffs have started and, yes indeed, the show will start without the Oilers attempting another miracle run. Some petty solace can be taken in the fact that the Maple Leafs and Canucks are also missing in action. "Canada's Team (2008 Edmonton Edition)" will probably have to be Montréal this playoff run. It can't possibly be Calgary and the Senators aren't really impressing right now. Go Habs? Mais Oui! TB and Dave split the league up and make some bold predictions.

TB VS THE EAST

Montreal (1) vs Boston (8) Montréal's been shooting the lights out. Boston's lucky to even be here. The Habs have won all eight matchups this season. Nothing's going to change; the Habs are going to spank the B's like a redheaded stepchild. Sweep! TB's call is Habs in 4 / Dave says Habs in 5
Pittsburgh (2) vs Ottawa (7) The Pens: hot. The Sens: cold. Both teams boast loads of young talent, but only one team has been winning. Watch for Ottawa to return to their losing playoff ways. TB says Pens in 6 / Dave says Pens in 5
Washington (3) vs Philadelphia (6) This series is gonna be nuts. Two hot teams. Philly's a rough team that likes to punish their opponent. Alex Ovechkin's the most dangerous player in the league.

These two teams may not have a ton of history right now, but I think the hate will be there before the end of this one. A tossup, but I'll go with the momentum. TB opts for Caps in 6 / Dave agrees

New Jersey (4) vs NY Rangers (5)

Two teams with great D. And the Devils can't score. Bad combo for them. Plus, the Rangers have won 7 out of 8 this year against the Devs. Brodeur will need to nail a 4x6 sheet of plywood to the goal just to make this one close.

TB calls the Rangers in 5 / Dave goes Jersey in 6

DAVE VS THE WEST

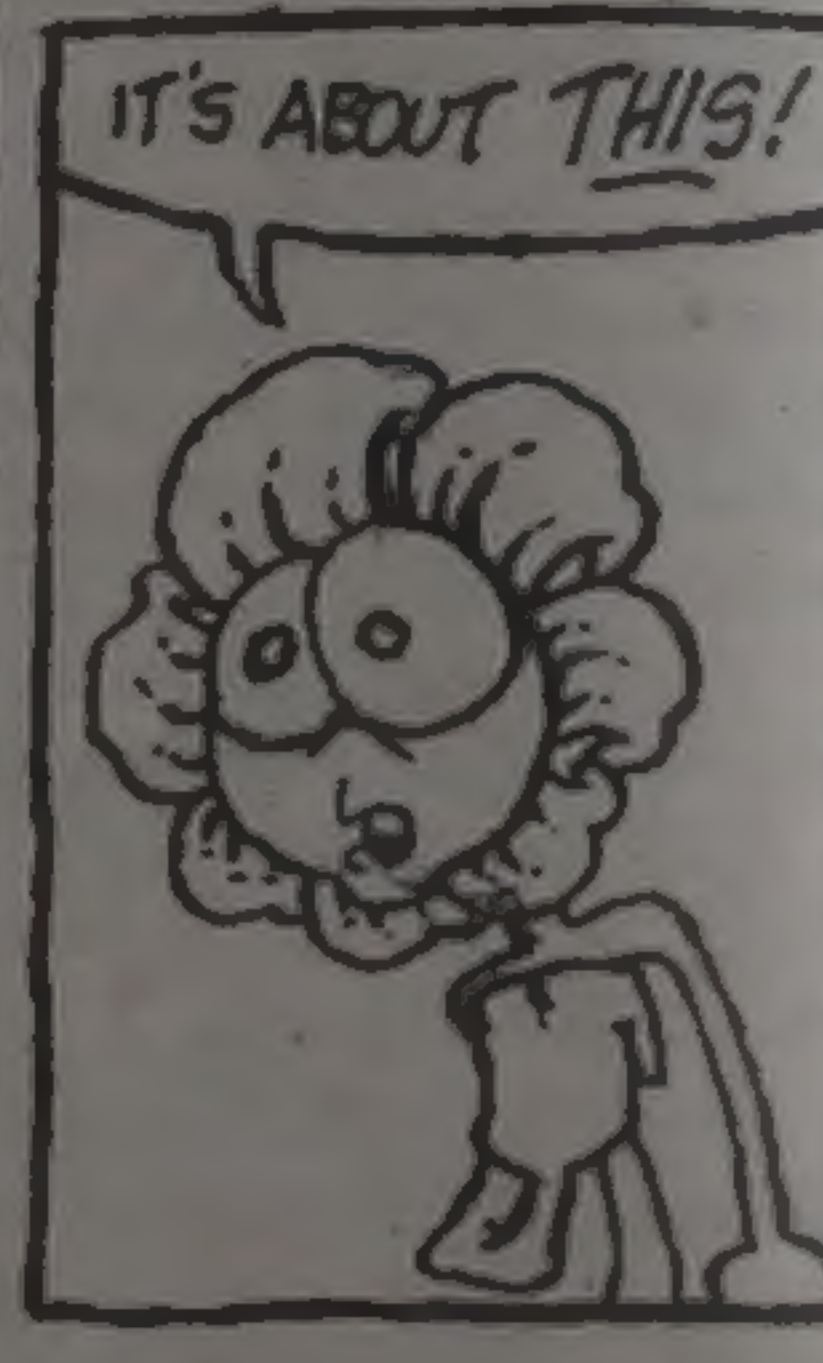
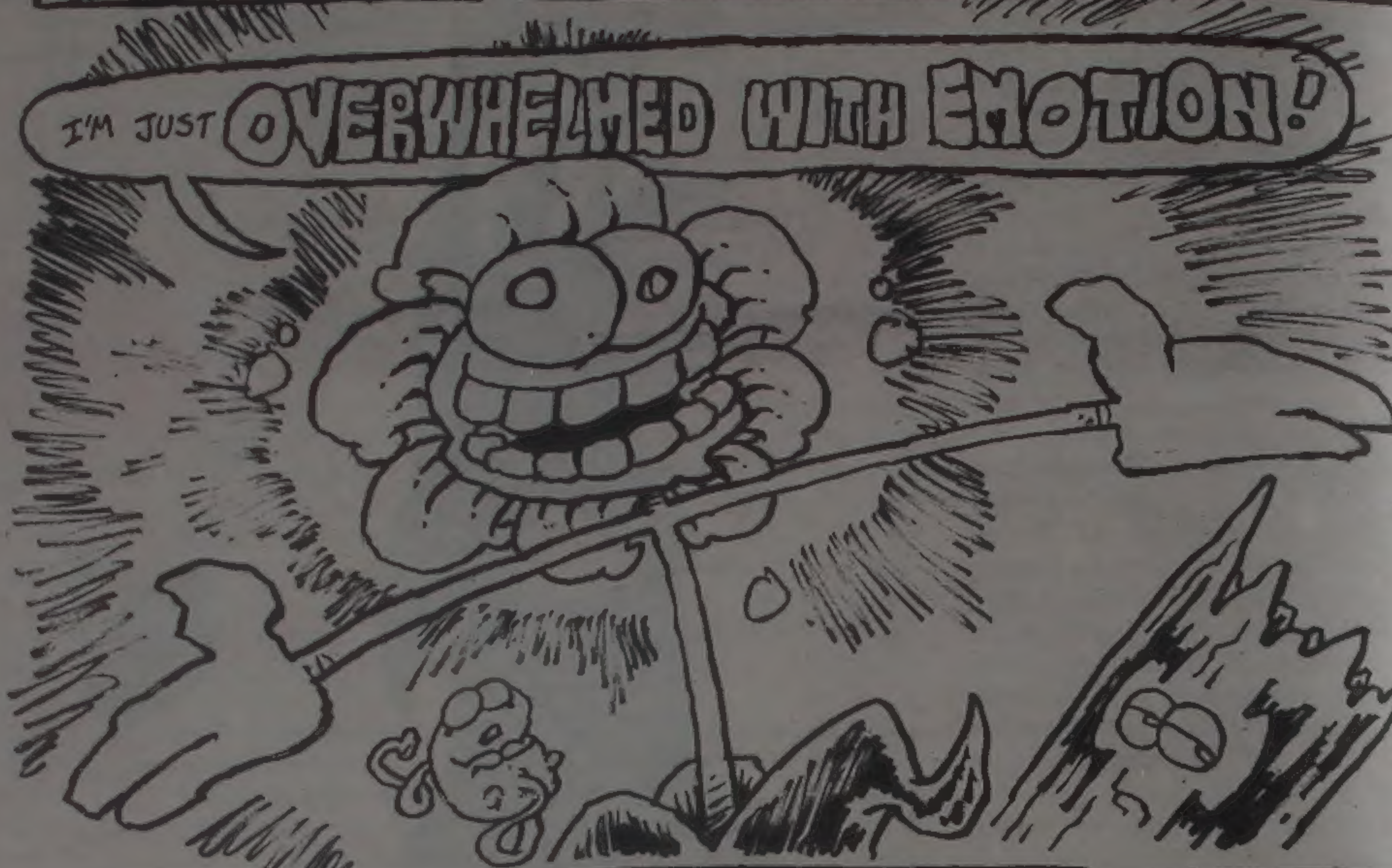
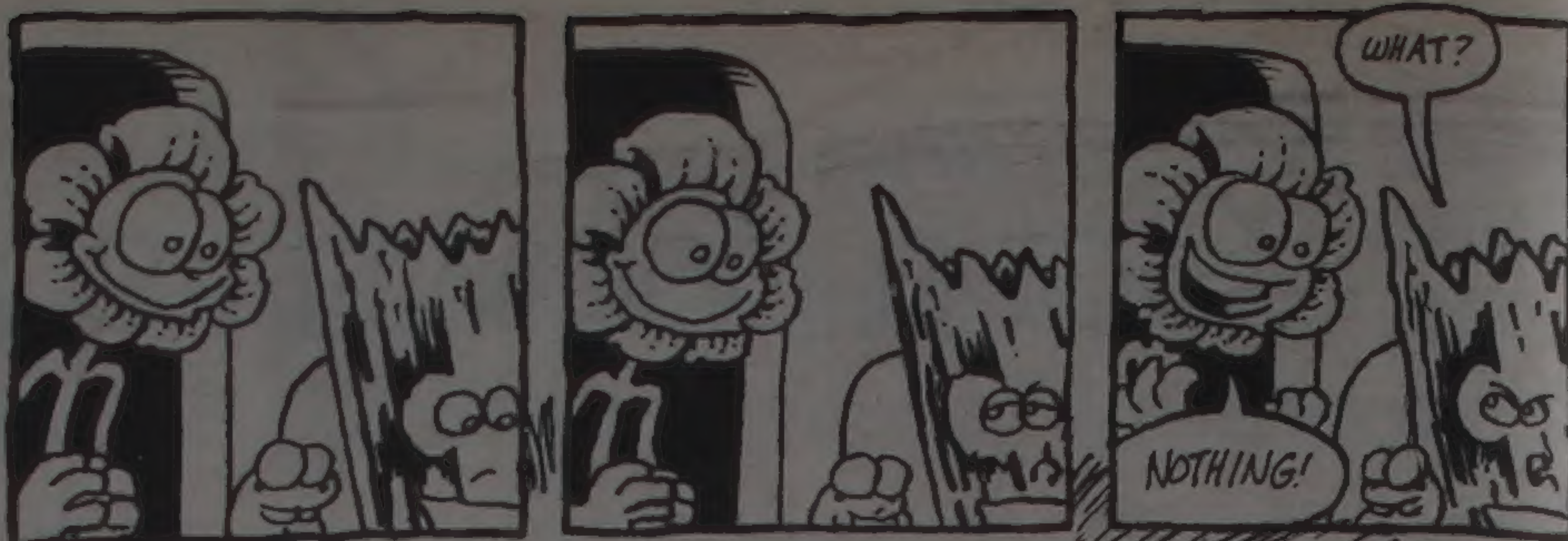
Detroit (1) vs Nashville (8) Since last season's lineup Nashville lost Peter Forsberg, Steve Sullivan, Paul Kariya and the city very nearly lost the entire team to the Blackberry guy. The Preds fought to make the playoffs but that will be it. They've never gotten past the first round of playoffs—ever. That will continue. Dave goes Wings in 5 / So does TB.

San Jose (2) vs Calgary (7) It's Calgary's brawn up against what may be the hottest team to enter the playoffs. But this is Calgary. Can't pick them. We'll leave that task to someone at one of Calgary's entertainment weeklies.

Dave says Sharks in 4 / TB: Sharks in 5
Minnesota (3) vs Colorado (6) Minnesota is one of those rare American states that really loves hockey. Their team is big and scary (Todd Fedoruk, Chris Simon, BOOgard), talented (Marian Gaborik) and play smart hockey (Jacques "burned the Firewagon down" Lemaire). Their fans deserve a playoff ride this year. Dave's prediction: Wild in 7 / TB goes Avs in 6

Anaheim (4) vs Dallas (5) Recent events (Pronger and Burke—best selling effigies at Edmonton's Effigies Are Us store) have allowed the Ducks to upstage former Oiler playoff rivals Dallas as the more hated team this year. My heart says Dallas; the rest (head, spleen, ass—even the liver when it is not mad at me for past abuses) say Ducks.

Dave's reluctant call: Ducks in 5 / TB echoes this



TOP 10 RINGTONES

- 1) Low
Flo Rida
- 2) Touch My Body
Mariah Carey
- 3) No Air Dust feat. Chris Brown
Jordin Sparks
- 4) 4 Minutes
Madonna
- 5) Break the Ice
Britney Spears
- 6) UnLove You
Elise Estrada
- 7) Apologize feat. OneRepublic
Timbaland
- 8) With You
Chris Brown
- 9) Love in This Club feat. Young Jeezy
Usher
- 10) Bleeding Love
Leona Lewis

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Unfeeling kismet reveals the depths of addiction

GAMES INFINITE LIVES
BY MARTIN ZUKER
 infinitelives@vultureweekly.com

Kismet. Destiny. Inescapable fate, whether it's the thread of a Viking's life as spun by the blind Norns, the store of a man's days as set down in the Book of Life ... or the operational lifespan of a piece of electronics as determined by its warranty period. Hidden actuaries project these things out, and their voodoo math makes reality: a warranty is a death-spell, a terminator gene like the time-bomb killswitch coded into *Blade Runner* replicants.

... except, unlike Rutger Hauer, my iBook didn't get to have a dove flutter heavy-handedly skyward as it took its fatal plunge to the tile floor, less than a week after its AppleCare period elapsed. It's time was up; the power of warranty expiration basically shoved it out of my hands and into eternity.

And so. You know what happens now. Out of retirement, out of necessity, comes the old warhorse, the beaten-down old ThinkPad that'd been put out to pasture (read: confined in a banker's box and shoved in a closet) so many years ago. You pick it up, and ... you know the feeling of exquisite delicacy you get when you pick up a really old cat? That's what it's like to handle my laptop.

A creaking, crashy bit-rotten install of goddamn Windows ME, the system restore discs long since lost in a series of moves; no wi-fi capacity; a single functional i/o port (USB) and an unhinged monitor; some kind of deep, deep trouble that makes opening any web browser impossible so I have to type URLs directly into the address bar of an empty folder, force the desktop itself out onto a Web that's 10 years beyond its comprehension ... so even a minor hang, hiccup or crashlet requires rebooting.

You've got to be a silver-lining type in these situations, channel a little Pollyanna for the sake of your own sanity. A half-dead, unreliable, breeze-fragile laptop from the Clinton years? Well, its lack of now-basic functionality will actually enhance my productivity! All my online time-wasters are dead to me—even a whiff of an embedded YouTube video ... even a whiff of a Flash animation ... only the distant, dimly lit sites come close to functioning properly, and the six-versions-ago install of Flash eliminates the possibility of playing any of the browser games that've been

eating up five or so hours out of every day. The only thing on this machine that actually works reliably is WordPad, the stripped-down text editing program. There's nothing to do here but write, right?

You'd think so. But the truly dedicated—maybe pathological?—procrastinator, work-shirker and gaming addict will always find a way. And so, a way was found.

ONE OF THE cool/interesting things about pulling a years-ago machine out of closetbound dotage is that, if you're like me and didn't do any housekeeping before shoving it into the darkness, is that it's kind of like a time capsule. There's the last things you were working on, the last photos you uploaded, the last sites you visited. Memories, nostalgia ... maybe a little bit of heartbreak. In my case, just past the old reviews (I'd forgotten how much I hated the *Minority Report* videogame) and sunny pics of distant girlfriends was an old, familiar doom: when last I used this machine, I still hadn't worn away the novelty of NES emulation.

So, there was the emulator—NEStor.exe, public beta 2, {c}2000—but ... where were the ROMs? For some reason—maybe in the poorly thought-out disc-space-clearing frenzy that originally destroyed my web-browsing capacity—I'd ditched my library of ripped Nintendo classics, the *Bionic Commandos* and *Little Nemo the Dream Masters*, and left myself with exactly two titles: *Snake, Rattle and Roll* and *Phantom Fighter*.

Now, these are both more-or-less terrible games. *Phantom Fighter* is a frustrating, repetitive, side-scrolling kung-fu adventure that's only interesting for its weird ancient-Chinese-vampire-hunter premise; *Snake, Rattle and Roll* is a mechanically interesting isometric action game rendered nearly unplayable by some of the most aggressively, purposely sadistic aggravation music I've ever heard. But, I took what getaway I could get: midnight of my first day of enforced "nothing to do but write" found me with my dust-crusted old gamepad in hand, grimly kicking the digital shit out of vampire after pink, hopping vampire.

Destiny ... kismet. There are some things that simply must be; they're part of the Math of the Universe. A service plan expires, and a laptop must die. His laptop dead, the true idiot (this term must make a comeback) finds a way, any way, to snatch empty entertainment from the jaws of productivity. The circle will not be broken. ▽

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Fighting cancer can be delicious, too

ELLA JAMESON / ella@vuweekly.com

Every good cookbook has a theme, be it the ingredient, the appliance or a dietary trend-of-the-month. I've got books that expound the virtues of fondue fantasies, meatball musings and low-calorie libations. Some of them I've even read.

Over the past decade countless cookbooks have claimed to hold the secret to wellness, whether it's weight-loss magic, a miracle fibre makeover or cooking for colon cleansing. These I've admittedly attempted to avoid.

Cooking with Foods That Fight Cancer by Richard Béliveau and Denis Gingras is another one of those health-food books that purports to hold the key to longevity—at least with respect to reducing your cancer risk. University of Quebec at Montreal researchers, Béliveau and Gingras previously co-authored a 2006 best-seller: *Foods That Fight Cancer: Preventing Cancer Through Diet*. Their newest book is a follow up to the first, offering the answer to the much-asked question: how do we cook with all this good stuff?

The book is chock full of information for those who wish to reduce their cancer risk, discussing what foods are full of cancer-fighting nutrients and how to prepare them to best take advantage. The basic premise of their research is that diet plays a significant role in the risk of developing cancer. Up to one third of cancers are linked to poor diet, particularly those lacking in plant foods such as fruit and vegetables.

COOKBOOK

COOKING WITH FOODS THAT FIGHT CANCER
BY RICHARD BÉLIVEAU AND DENIS GINGRAS
MILLER LANE & STEWART
272 PP, \$29.99

ACCORDING TO Béliveau and Gingras, pathologies that develop as a result of chronic inflammation may increase the risk for the development of cancer. Foods that reduce the inflammatory response are seen to act as a form of cancer prevention. Obesity, in addition to its impact on cardiovascular disease and diabetes, also appears to trigger the development of certain cancers.

The authors go on to describe which foods we should be highlighting in our diets, including some that are more traditionally consumed (mushrooms, berries, tomatoes) and some that are less commonly found in the North American diet (green tea, seaweed, probiotics).

Part three of the book moves to the recipes which Béliveau and Gingras have compiled with the assistance of a number of top-notch Quebec chefs and dietitians. I found the recipes to be a hodge-podge collection of everything from miso soup to Tex-Mex chili. A recipe for Shepherd's pie sits adjacent to another for Sicilian-style spaghetti and is followed by another for Turmeric curry chicken.

Still, by carefully selecting a number of recipes that I felt might complement each other, I was able to prepare enough from the book for a dinner party I was holding for my



brother. With a strong family history of cancer, there was nothing to lose and everything to gain from reading through and cooking from this substantial tome.

I BEGAN BY SERVING Feta-Stuffed Mushrooms, a fairly complicated recipe that didn't quite measure up to all the time spent chopping nuts, onions, garlic and feta cheese. Given the number of similar recipes out there with a more manageable list of ingredients, I would n't attempt this one again.

Next, I made the very presentable Thai Shrimp and Fruit Salad. I particularly enjoyed the freedom of choosing

which fruit I wanted to use, settling on watermelon, kiwi and mango for a colorful combination. This recipe was simple but had huge visual impact. The combination of sweet fruit and spicy Thai herbs made for a great mingling of flavors.

With great finesse and certain amount of pride I brought out my three main dishes: Rice Pilaf with Green Peas and Almonds, Sautéed Indonesian Noodles and Turmeric-Curry Chicken.

The rice pilaf combined basmati, raisins, peas and almonds with a plethora of spices from the Far East to create a bright yellow bowl of tasty

goodness. It made a fine backdrop for the remainder of the dishes, and easily trumped my usual plain white basmati for both flavor and appearance with a minimum of fuss.

My brother is a big noodle fan, so I was very pleased with the Indonesian noodles for both flavour and presentation. In fact they would have made a fine meal on their own, with shrimp, pork, celery and cabbage added for both balance and color. I used traditional Chinese wheat noodles, forgoing the Americanized pasta which is temptingly cheaper. A trip to the Chinese market offered many choices for the same cost as typical grocery store options.

The star of the dinner was the turmeric infused curry chicken which tempted my guests with its odour long before it hit the table. Simmering chicken breasts in curry and coconut milk on the stove for 20 minutes filled the main floor of my home with a delightful smell that lingered in the air two days later.

The chicken was simple to prepare, tender and flavorful. I had to share the recipe with more than one guest, and I know I'll be making it again, especially as I now have a nearly-full bottle of fish sauce in my fridge.

Overall I have to admit that the chefs featured in this book certainly know their way around the kitchen. If cooking with an abundance of fresh and flavorful ingredients will reduce my risk of cancer, bring it on! I'd be more than happy to add more spice to my cuisine and try things outside my normal comfort zone—all for the benefit of my health. ♥



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Don't pass Parkallen Restaurant by

JAN HOSTYN / jan@vancouverweekly.com

To me, the barren stretch of 109 street between 63 avenue and Whyte is just a means to an end. During my university days, my bus would spew forth noxious exhaust fumes over that stretch of road while it transported me to and from campus. When I graduated and started working downtown, my mode of transportation changed, but 109 street was still an integral part of my daily commute. Now, with my downtown days behind me, I still can't escape its existence.

Parkallen Restaurant has been nestled in the midst of that busy stretch for as long as I can remember but I've never really noticed it. So,

LEBANESE

MON - FRI 11 AM - 3 PM, 5 - 10 PM
SAT, SUN 5 - 10 PM

PARKALLEN RESTAURANT
7018 - 109 ST, 436 8080

after a long, hard Sunday, I was somewhat surprised to spot a welcoming "open" sign in the window as my husband and I searched for somewhere to erase the stresses of the day.

We pulled up out front with little in the way of expectations. The building itself was fairly plain. I was thinking pizza at a typical pizza joint. But as we scurried under the charming archway, passing through the snowy patio and by the little potted trees adorned with sparkling lights, my

hopes for the evening began to escalate. We pulled open the door and entered a different universe.

It's funny how an exterior can be so deceptive. Elegance surrounded us, from the pristine linen tablecloths to the inviting dark wooden chairs, warm earthy tones, dim soothing lighting and gently flickering candles. Although it was almost 9 pm and there was only one other couple in the restaurant, lingering over the remnants of their wine, we were greeted warmly and our concerns that perhaps we were too late were waved away graciously.

After sinking back in the comfort-

CONTRIBUTOR: KIM PHILLIPS

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Flowers spring in city's culinarily desolate North End

JAN HOSTYN / jan@vancouverweekly.com

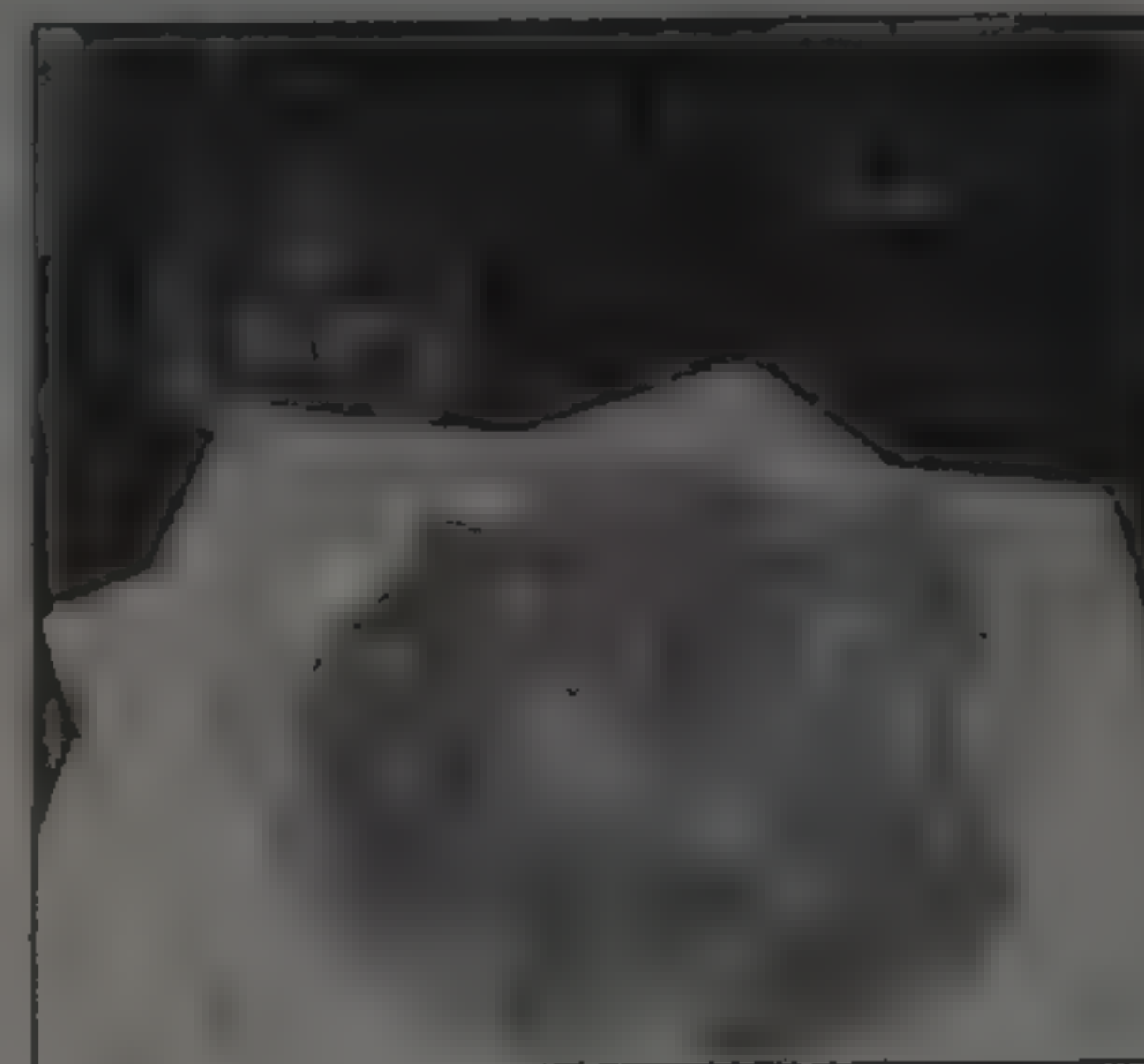
North End is not what you would call an oasis of culinary delights. The plethora of so-called eateries serving lacklustre food in soulless surroundings doesn't exactly qualify. The thought of being stranded in that vast abyss when my stomach was demanding nourishment is enough to give me nightmares.

A recent Friday evening found the nightmare edging a bit too close to reality. Due to poor planning on my husband's part (never mine), rumbling stomachs and plummeting moods overcame us while immersed in the depths of Castledowns. Had we been stranded in any other part of the city, numerous dining options would have been battling it out. As it was, a flashing vacant sign had lodged itself in my mind and panic started to set in as the neon lights began swirling together into a massive jumble. Just as the nightmare was about to take a downward spiral, we stumbled upon **SanRemo Italian Bistro** hidden amongst the endless big box entities in one of the countless strip malls of Namas Centre.

After we bustled through the door, I was struck by the attractive interior: inviting, warm and comfortable, contrasting sharply to the bleak starkness of the never-ending concrete just steps away.

WE SETTLED into our cozy booth and surveyed the room. The attention to detail immediately caught my eye. SanRemo's elegant glass sign was really a miniature waterfall, softly lit and gently falling, just like my level of anxiety. An assortment of families, friends and couples occupied the mixture of tables and booths, all done in warm, earthy tones. Dim lighting and flickering candles made it even more engaging. A huge urn overflowing with artificial flowers grandly inhabited the center of the bistro; they must have been paying homage to the little Italian town—San Remo, also known as the Town of Flowers—that the restaurant was named after.

Menus were presented, but the kids needed beverages and my husband and I needed a drink. Craving a reminder of the balmy days of summer, the kids couldn't resist the appeal of lemonade (\$2.25 a glass). We wanted red wine, but not a whole bottle. The choice was easy; only the house wine was offered by the glass



ITALIAN
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SAT 4:30 - 10 PM, SUN 11:30 AM - 3:30 PM
SANREMO ITALIAN BISTRO
9621 - 167 AVE, 478.0006

or half litre, a Donini merlot (\$13.95 for a half litre).

Sipping the fruity wine, I couldn't help but wish the magnificent view I had of the hockey game in the attached lounge wasn't quite so visible. An intimate family dinner should involve actual conversation, unhindered by surreptitious glances at unwelcome (to some) distractions.

Ignoring the game, we focussed on the menu. Small but complete, there seemed to be a bit of everything: a few appetizers, a soup, a salad, some pastas and entrees. The absence of pizza brought frowns to the kids' faces, but gnocchi came to the rescue. Our waiter informed us that half orders were available, so we got the girls each a half order of the gnocchi, one with tomato sauce and one lightly tossed in butter (\$11.95 for a full order). My husband and I each ordered a bowl of minestrone soup (\$5.50) to start, followed by the rigatoni in a homemade meat sauce (\$10.50) for my husband and a half order of the Fusilli Primavera (\$11.95 for a full order) for me.

I made the mistake of not asking how much a half-order was. Maybe it was because our waiter, while friendly, was a little too friendly. When it came time for me to order, he boldly asked "and for Mom?" Now, having anyone other than my kids call me "Mom" is a bit disconcerting, but when a twentysomething male audaciously does so it becomes somewhat creepy, if not downright offensive. My shocked and befuddled scowl did nothing to dissuade him, and the term was used relentlessly through-

out the rest of the evening.

THANKFULLY, the food only spoke through its tantalizing range of flavours and tempting aromas. Steaming bowls of chunky minestrone soup arrived at the table along with the two orders of plump gnocchi. Fresh ground pepper and parmesan grated at the table was a nice touch. As a mom, I'm (sometimes) able to raid the plates of my children. The order with the tomato sauce was declared off-limits, but my youngest was more than willing to share her butter-laced gnocchi. Although meltingly tender, the copious amount of butter it was swimming in made it heavy and overwhelming. The zesty tomato sauce was a much better partner for it.

When the buttery gnocchi was declared too rich, my daughter's eyes landed on my minestrone. Having only savoured a few bites of the vibrant tomato basil broth loaded with an assortment of tender vegetables and kidney beans, I was reluctant to see it go; I did thoroughly enjoy the last few spoonfuls that she couldn't squeeze into her small stomach, though.

Our communal soup wasn't quite finished when the pastas arrived at the table. My Primavera held abundant chunks of firm and supple vegetables, nestled in a flavourful tomato sauce and livened up with the light touch of garlic and basil. The sauce on my husband's Rigatoni was more tomato-y than meaty but had enough meaty undertones to appease him. My only complaint was that the pastas could have been cooked a little less.

We ended the evening with two orders of Tartufo (vanilla ice cream surrounded by Belgian chocolate ice cream then rolled in dutch cocoa powder, \$5.25 each). Beautifully presented in white "boats," the balls were split in the middle, judiciously filled with billowy whipped cream, and drizzled with chocolate. A perfect finish.

Well, a perfect finish except for the bill. Half-orders are half a portion but almost the same price (\$9.95) as a full order (\$11.95). Had we known, we wouldn't have bothered with half orders; the leftovers would have been put to good use.

SanRemo is a friendly family-owned neighbourhood bistro that serves up fresh, satisfying, real food amidst questionable alternatives. Thankfully, nightmares don't always come true. ▽

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- Soups _____
- Salads _____
- Breads _____
- Steaks _____
- Venison _____
- Sushi _____
- Tapas _____
- Pub Food _____
- Dim Sum _____
- Sandwiches _____
- Hamburgers _____
- French Fries _____
- Wraps _____
- Pizza _____
- Desserts _____
- Chicken Wings _____
- Best Sweets _____
- Snacks (pretzels, bagels) _____

best restaurants

- Best Rest. (Fine Dining) _____
- Best Rest. (Mid Price) _____
- Breakfast _____
- Bakery _____
- Coffee Shop _____
- Tea Shop _____
- Deli _____
- Bavarian _____
- Greek _____
- French _____
- Italian/Pasta _____
- Chinese _____
- Thai _____
- Japanese _____
- East Indian/Tandoori _____
- Mexican/Latin American _____
- Steakhouse _____
- Seafood _____
- Vegetarian _____
- African _____
- Juice Bar _____
- Continental _____

other bests

- Best New Restaurant _____
- Pre-theatre dining _____
- Restaurant for lovers _____
- Innovative menu _____
- Wine list _____
- Beer list _____
- When you only have \$10 _____
- When going solo _____
- Late night/all night _____
- Weekend brunch _____
- Best service _____
- Sports Bar _____
- Best Patio _____
- Best Hotel Restaurant _____
- Ultimate Dining Experience _____
- Best Independent Wine Store _____
- Best For People Watching _____

This is your official ballot. Send it in!

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click and enter



Entries must be received no later than 5 pm, May 7 2008

(No duplicate entries, 1 entry per person. Any entries with identical writing to another will be discarded. Standard contest entries also apply.)

This year VUEWEEKLY will offer two awards in each category. One for independent and one for chain.

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*Chain may not be awarded in all categories (Do you know of any chain African restaurants?)

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100 bottles of beer in the hall: tales from Beerfest

PHOTO: JEFFREY M. HARRIS/STUDIO CITY

The first question that hit me when I walked into the hall for the second annual **Edmonton International Beer Festival** was "Where do I start?" The Festival ran on April 4 and 5 at the Shaw Conference Centre, and it filled out the venue quite nicely. The festival was packed with more than 55 exhibitors, representing dozens of breweries (plus a few novelty items such as a tattoo parlour) and, by my estimation, offering 150 beers for sampling. I realized quickly there was no way I was going to work through them all—not while remaining conscious, anyway. I needed a plan.

The many beers on tap spanned the globe and the range of availability and accessibility. Some of Edmonton's microbreweries were present, as were the big boys, of course. There were beers from places we all know as beer-countries, like Scotland and Germany, but there were also beers from unexpected locations such as Ukraine.

The big corporate brewers had flashy, larger booths. Budweiser's booth, for instance, included a small-scale country bar where you could sit and be served by women in checkered Bud shirts. The smaller breweries were more under-stated and focussed on their beer. Where the big breweries hired young, attractive women who knew little about beer, the smaller breweries generally had their regular reps (most often men) who could talk intelligently about beer. Impressively, Scottish brewer Innis & Gunn, famous for its oak-aged beer, sent one of their partners (Innis) to pour samples.

THE INTERNATIONAL BEER FESTIVAL worked like this: a \$20 entrance fee (\$15 in advance) got you in the door where you could purchase coupons for 50 cents each; each booth offered up 4 oz samples for two to five tickets each. You then spent your evening



sampling beers. If you needed a break, there was live entertainment at one end of the hall, some food (of the fast variety) available, and some non-beer exhibitors to peruse. There was also an on-site liquor store so you could pick up a six-pack of your new favourite on your way out the door.

There was also a "Beer School", hosted by the Edmonton Homebrewers' Guild, where Guild members walked participants through a short course on beer flavours and styles, complete with little jars of malt and hops for props.

Unfortunately, there were also a number of hard alcohol and shooter booths, which I personally found off-putting. They were out of place and fostered more of a frat boy atmosphere

around them. I think they served only as irritating distractions from the more relaxed sport of beer sampling. I hope the organizers move away from them for next year's version.

AN ESTIMATED 5000 people worked their way through the booths over the two days. It was a mixed crowd. Earlier in the evening, it was a bit older—couples and small groups of beer fans working their way slowly through the more exotic and interesting beers. As the night wore on, a younger crowd took over—university-aged clusters engaging in much faster sampling, leading to more noise and more exuberance. But it was a classic beer crowd—friendly, upbeat and casual.

I think that is the key difference between beer festivals and wine festivals. Wine events have a decidedly upscale, serious tone to them. Beer fests know they are about fun as well

as trying new and interesting beer. The exhibitors are more laid back, and the crowd feeds off that.

As for my plan, I decided to focus at first on beers that I had not tried before, which shortened the list significantly. In this initial go-round, I found a series of beer from O'Hanlon's, a small English independent brewery with a fast-growing reputation. Yellowhammer is their light blonde ale, which was fruity and very accessible. On the more bold end was their Original Port Stout, a thick, dark stout infused with port. The port notes added a rich complexity to the beer.

Maybe the oddest new find was Beer in a Box. Yes, in a box. It comes with its own tap setup and a small canister of carbon dioxide. Hook it up and get instant cardboard keg. Too bad the beer was astringent and soapy. I quickly moved on.

Toronto brewer Mill Street had some of their wares available, including their noted Organic Lager. It's one of the few fully organic beers in Canada, and it's a light, refreshing lager. I detect a little grassy hops, but mostly it is clean and good for summertime after mowing the lawn.

Then there were those Ukrainian beers, Slavutych and one whose name I could not pronounce, spell or remember. They were crisp, pale lagers that were much better than expected. Both leaned towards a corny malt and light hopping. Worth another try on another day, possibly.

ONCE I HAD HIT the highlights of beers untried, I turned my attention to beers I know I enjoy. Pleasant and familiar stops at Wildrose for their IPA, at Amber's for a quick Mountain Pepper Berry Ale and at the Homebrew Guild table who were serving up Alley Kat for tasting purposes brought a smile to my face.

A visit to the Creemore Springs brewery was fortuitous for all involved. In the first glass pulled I

picked up a distinct taste of cleaning agent—detergent and chlorine. A quick switch to a different keg proved to be much more palatable. The first keg had something wrong with it, but for the rest of the night all was fine for visitors to their booth.

A third fun strategy for beerfest sampling is to pick a type of beer (brown ales or pilseners, for example) and go to a number of the booths who have that kind of beer. This allows for a side-by-side tasting of the different competitors, which can be quite fun.

After a couple hours sampling and tasting, you find yourself with a warm glow and a euphoric feeling that the world is a good place. That is the power of good beer.

Put the International Beer Festival on your calendar for next year's installment. I know I have. **V**

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Whistler scene shaped by mountains, arts and 2010

RON YAMAUCHI / rony@vuwweekly.com

You couldn't have hockey without a puck, sex without skin, fries without ketchup. To every skier and snowboarder living in Vancouver, Whistler (whistlerblackcomb.com) holds that kind of dominance in our consciousness. Its size, proximity and interdependence with Vancouver as a shared site of the 2010 Winter Olympics make it as much a part of this city as the Canucks, sushi and fair-trade coffee.

Being a contrary sort of fellow, and also rather thrifty, I've been avoiding Whistler for years. It seemed like a silly kind of place, an impression not contradicted by *Whistler*, the snowboarding/murder mystery drama on CTV. But life's not television. It was long past time to check out the real thing, and there was a friend we wanted to see. We jammed the family into the VW and took to the road.

The Sea-to-Sky Highway is one of the coast's most scenic routes, with sheer rock faces on one side and stunning ocean views on the other. The highway is also said to be the most dangerous in British Columbia, with numerous fatalities out of some 300-odd annual crashes. Having driven it many times to go hiking in Squamish, my personal belief is that the road is fine—it's the drivers that are hazardous. The trip takes about 2.5 hours from Vancouver, unless you think you're Michael Schumacher, in which case it takes the remainder of your life.

Nonetheless, with the Olympics expecting to at least double the 14 000 cars that use it daily, the province is spending hundreds of millions to straighten out some of the hairpins and make more passing lanes on the parts that are already straight.

Two million people already visit Whistler every year for conferences, golfing, river rafting, weddings, parties, concerts, mountain biking, and fishing. Oh, and snow. There are over 8000 skiable acres of the stuff, spread over two mountains (Whistler and Blackcomb, joined at the village base), accessed by 38 lifts, during a season that goes from November until July.



CULTURE SHOCK

INTELLECTUALLY, I KNEW Whistler was going to be massive. But it was still difficult to adjust to the sheer scope of the place. We were able to get an early check-in at the Tantalus Lodge, which consists entirely of comfortable two-bedroom units with kitchens, easily sleeping six guests. (It also had underground parking and, most importantly, two hot tubs, for that decadent "I'm-in-Whistler" feeling.)

The Tantalus is one of the village's 115 hotels, resorts and chalets, a

large figure in its own right. The rube-like goggling really began when the Tantalus shuttle dropped us at the guest relations building, a massive glass edifice in which we were efficiently processed with tickets and gear and turned out in the centre of an almost unnervingly cute and scenic town square, with cobblestone streets filled with smiling high-rollers chatting away in various languages.

The culture shock experience compares only with my first trip to New York, in which I suddenly realized that it was a true city and that I had only been living in a town. Size does matter after all.

The feeling of awe continued on the lifts. It's one thing to read that

there are over 200 separate ski trails, and another to realize that it would take a good week to fully explore the massive terrain. There's really no kind of riding that you can't get here. It has glaciers, bowls, glades, steepes, and several different types of freestyle playground.

It's difficult to take it all in, and after a while I stopped trying. I'd never been on a chair lift whose route intersected with other routes below or above us, like the streams of flying cars in the sci-fi movie *The Fifth Element*. I've never seen a place where just one chair, the Wizard at Blackcomb, had all of the facilities of one of our local mountains.

Fortunately, snow is snow, and

eventually you can just settle down and enjoy the moment: that magic interaction of gravity, friction, and balance. The conditions were good for spring: dry, mixed sun and cloud, a few centimetres of new snow on a base of over 250 cm.

The mountain is big enough to allow territory to be set aside for distinct zones, eg chairs with mostly green and blue runs. We hung out a lot in the family area, which had a number of runs of combination difficulty; my daughter cruised in the wide-open boulevard while her dad took his act into the moguls, while remaining in line of sight. Although the trails are all well marked and logically connected, it's still possible to get lost. In addition to the freedom of choice, Whistler and Blackcomb offer long runs. The trail from the peak of Whistler to the base could easily take an hour.

If cross-country skiing is what you crave, there is an official Olympic Games site just 15 kilometres south. I decided to check out the Whistler Olympic Park (whistlerolympicpark.com) and also to learn the nordic side of things.

Towering over the landscape are the elite ski jump ramps, which are nerve-wracking simply to behold. Under and around them are 40 km of groomed trails, several of which I got to experience while tripping onto my face; cross-country turned out to be harder than I anticipated. Thanks to a patient instructor (the entire facility has an air of geniality, perhaps because it's still a construction zone, with the offices in trailers), we were soon getting into the (literal) groove. We even got to take in the last laps of a biathlon race, which is a fantastic spectator sport. All of this varied activity adds up to a powerful experience, not to mention a mighty hunger.

IT'S NOT HARD to find a good meal in town. There are about 90 restaurants, but we went to 21 Steps at the recommendation of our friend Chili Thom. Getting there was a pleasant walk through the carefully planned streets. As a young town, economically root-

PHOTOGRAPH BY [unreadable]

VUEWEEKLY

SNOW ZONE

Thanks for reading! See you November 20th for a new year of amazing skiing coverage.

Grouse Mountain provides perfect place to ride off into sunset

JEREMY DERKSEN / snowzone@vancouverweekly.com

Rain, sun, touches... all things Vancouver is known for. Skiing? Less than half an hour away? Not so much. But Grouse Mountain has a lot to offer—panoramic views, top-notch restaurants and 26 runs on 384 metres of vertical drop. It's not big but it's got style, and it's a great place to bid farewell to another season as the sun sets over the ocean and the lights of Vancouver begin to glisten in the dusk. From this high mount, I sought some perspective on another season drawing to a close.

I travel to Vancouver once or twice a year, usually to visit friends and enjoy the temperate coastal weather and summer activities. After a lazy April spring day in Vancouver, it seemed strange pulling on snowpants and a winter jacket and trudging out to the car with ski boots slung over my shoulder. Nonetheless my friends and I set out in rush-hour evening traffic, passing through Stanley Park and over Lion's Gate Bridge up to the Grouse parking lot.

From first glance, it's plain Grouse thrives as a tourist attraction, in winter as much as summer. As we unloaded, a tour bus arrived and some 60 passengers disembarked for the Skyride gondola. Some visitors come for sightseeing on the 100-passenger Skyride cars, others for skiing or skating, wildlife viewing or high altitude dining. But many locals frequent the hill as well for its three ter-



RIDE GROUSE MOUNTAIN

rain parks and variety of runs, from the standard blues and greens to its two double blacks, Purgatory and Devil's Advocate

At 6 pm, the sun was still high and bright. After runs down The Cut and Upper Buckhorn, we headed for the Olympic Express quad. From the top, we played tourist, snapping photos of each other against a backdrop of mountains, ocean and city set off by a hazy orange horizon. Below, we hammered the bumps on Peak run for a while, until the night cooled off. Despite

being late in the season, a coastal, humid chill had set in.

Grouse has two restaurants, the fine dining Observatory and classy but casual Altitudes. The latter is home to the hill's regular Wednesday Social Nights, where skiers and riders gather to enjoy good food, drinks, DJs and, sometimes, win prizes. A central hearth blazed as we took our seats by the window, where yet another vista of Vancouver presented itself. Over a bottle of Argentinian Malbec, we savoured pan-fried prawns with green curry cashew dip and individual dinners of braised lamb shank, penne and sautéed chicken and a grilled vegetable and arugula sandwich. By the time we finished, it was almost 10 pm—the hill's closing time. The warm blush of red wine faded in the frosty air as we hastily tried to squeeze in a few more runs.

PHOTO BY JEREMY DERKSEN FOR SNOW ZONE

always, spring is bittersweet for skiers, filled with sunny days, good company and the last few soft slushy spring turns. But every year is different—weather is unpredictable, fortunes change, new developments alter the landscape. This is an exciting time for the industry, with expansions and development at major resorts across the Rockies, but it's also a time of uncertainty as the industry comes to grips with environmental impact and new economic realities.

At least for this season, like death and taxes, one thing is relatively certain: winter will inevitably melt into spring. How you deal with that is up to you, but I recommend following some of the suggestions in this week's issue for ripping hard, getting wet and frolicking in the natural beauty of the mountains before time runs out.

Here, like everywhere, last call is coming soon. ▽

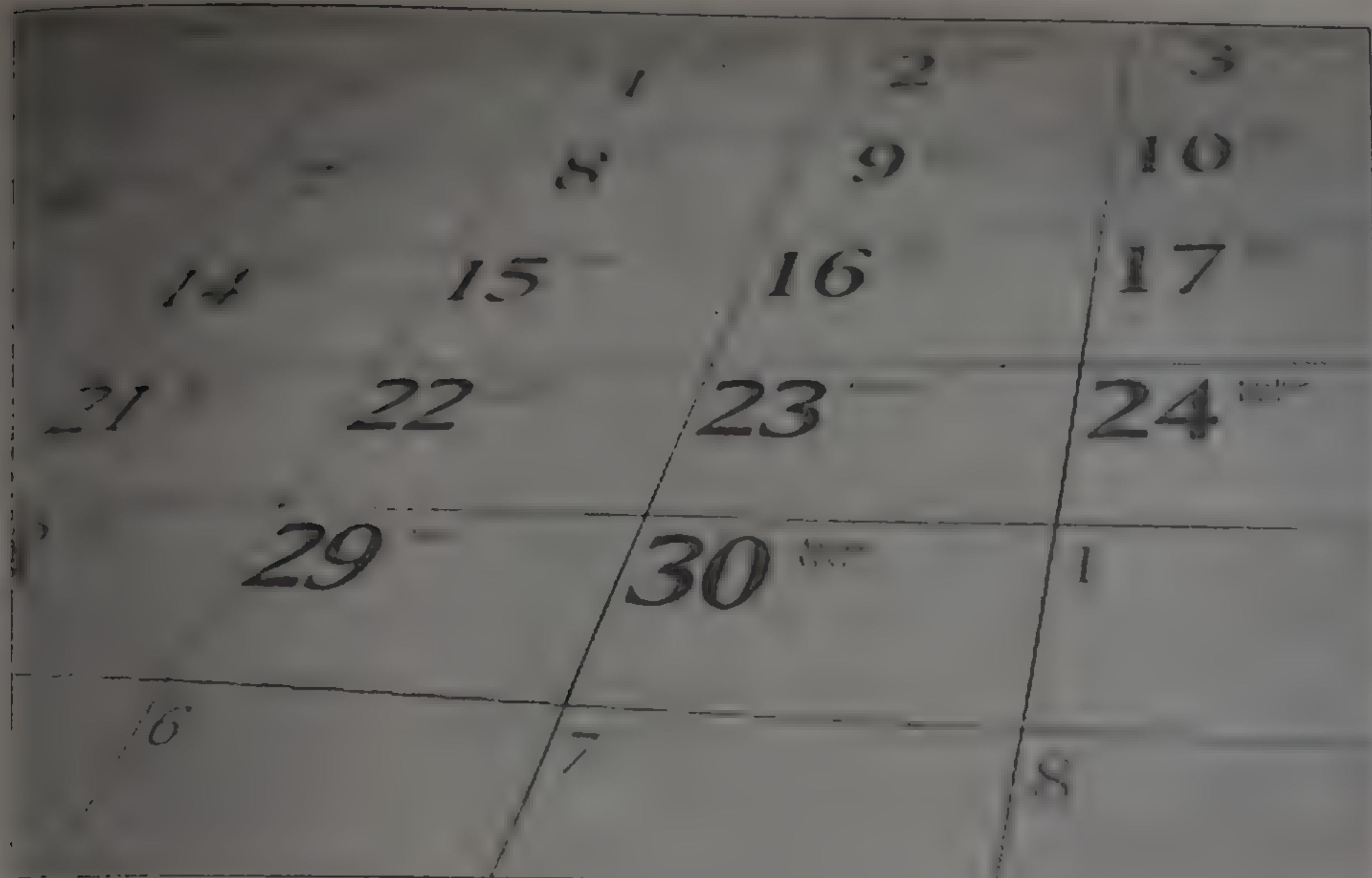
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SKI TIPS

kenhl@vueweekly.com

I write this on the morning of the last day of the season in Fernie, my home. Tomorrow my season pass will be of no use. The lifts will hang inert.

Every year there are a few things I do after finishing skiing the last day. Hard-learned habits. On my way home, I drop my skis off for a tune and wax. The rest of my skiing this year will be touring and my teles are dialed. My alpine boards will be hung up. Too many years, on the first day of the season, I've looked at my alpine and the edges spotted with rust and the gouges

from the last spring days ripping on sunny days through marginal conditions, a variety of canyons running the length of the bases. No more—instead, I make sure to tune 'em before I stash them for summer.

Same goes for the rest of my gear. I toss my gloves on a heat register, I pull my boots apart, leaving the liners, foot beds and shims scattered across my living room. Not Martha Stewart's idea of fine décor, but it works for me. And, in a couple of days, I open a bottle of wine or grab a couple beers and re-assemble the scattered parts. I make sure there are no little tweaks or wrinkles in the liners—everything is straight, in place—and then I buckle my boots loosely for a well-deserved summer rest. I wash my ski pants to get the dirt and mud of the park-

ing lot off the cuffs

With the boots dry, my gloves tired of being on the heat register, my pants looking new, I gather my goggles, the couple of spare pairs, my toques and toss it all in a small duffel for next year and opening day.

If you make these things habit, you'll thank yourself at the start of each new season. But until then, happy trails. Ride your bike up a winding single track. Drop into a wave in your boat. Jam your hands in a sun warmed crack and move above the last pro, wondering if it's really any good. The Fat Lady is humming and it's pretty loud. In a few hours, she'll break out in full voice wrapping up the final chorus of a great year.

Enjoy the spring and the summer. Winter will be here soon enough. ▽

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CULTURE SHOCK

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

ed in tourism, Whistler has been built to give the best views of the countryside. There are a very few bits of old jumps or lift towers; the rest has clearly been passed through the hands of architects.

The result is almost cloyingly breathtaking, a sort of theme park that happens to also be a working downtown with police, fire, city hall and other services for the nearly 10,000 permanent residents.

Despite having been up all night the night before ("I was upgrading my ProTools"), Chili greeted us with enthusiasm. It is his most salient characteristic; at 32, he's one of the most self-actualized people imaginable. A highly sought-after landscape painter, with a full slate of commissions, Chili is also a prolific club DJ, professional decorator, dancer, bon vivant veteran of the festival circuit and filmmaker (see chilithom.com).

We met during the taping of *Wild At Heart*, the Knowledge Network adventure tourism series for which Chili served as narrator, field guide and cook. My wife Willow and I were participants in the eighth episode, which saw us riding horses and climbing a mountain in the Rockies. Chili had beguiled us with his non-stop energy, and we kept in touch after the show.

Since he's lived in Whistler for a dozen years, I figured Chili could explain its culture and appeal to me. Though admitting that, looks-wise, "it's a Disneyland for adults," Chili relishes life in Whistler. "It's the community," he explains. "Supportive yet incestuous. Everyone knows everyone."

As well as being in the midst of people who love the outdoors in the day, and Whistler's exotic and varied club scenes at night, Chili likes being in the middle of an impending boom in the arts. "There's a massive crew of artists, performers, DJs. With the growing Whistler Arts Council there's more to do, more nurturing of artists." He cites Artrageous, a showcase of art and per-

formance, and high-profile individual talents like the tattoo artist Pepe and filmmaker/go-go dancing enthusiast Ace MacKay Smith as evidence of Whistler's growing artistic stature.

Of course, it is the massive influx of the well-heeled during the 2010 Winter Olympics, which is driving the arts community, as well as every other business sector in the region. The boom in construction will generate much-needed new housing units in the form of the athlete's village, but in the meantime it is an absurdly expensive place to live. Ads in *Pique*, the local paper, indicate that a studio is \$1000, a two-bedroom suite \$2500 per month.

It's not a cheap place to visit, either, but if you really wanted to save money, you probably wouldn't be into snowboarding or skiing. At some point, you'll scrape up the pennies and visit, demanding to know what the hype is all about.

And you might stay. In the words of Chili Thom: "Once you're in Whistler you're here." ▽

Spring Episode '08 at Lake Louise

SNOW ZONE FALL LINES

This year, Lake Louise's last day of riding and skiing will be Apr 27. This weekend is loaded with events to foster a total party atmosphere. Appleton's and Kokanee are the prime sponsors so you can expect the Cuba Libres and beer will be flowing all weekend. Social Code will play live on Saturday at 3 pm and on Sunday music will be courtesy of Rockstar DJs spinning their tunes and an '80s cover band. Snow golf, Plinko, mountain bike trials, best one-piece suit and big hair contests are just some of the festive activities that should keep you entertained. If you're the big eating type you may even have to consider the hot



dog eating contest. For me, a nice sunny deck with an Appleton beverage would be a nice end to this amazing ski season. Not unlike many before it started with

great fear of poor snow conditions, but in the end, Mother Nature pulled through very nicely and all the ski hill operators should be pleased. ▽

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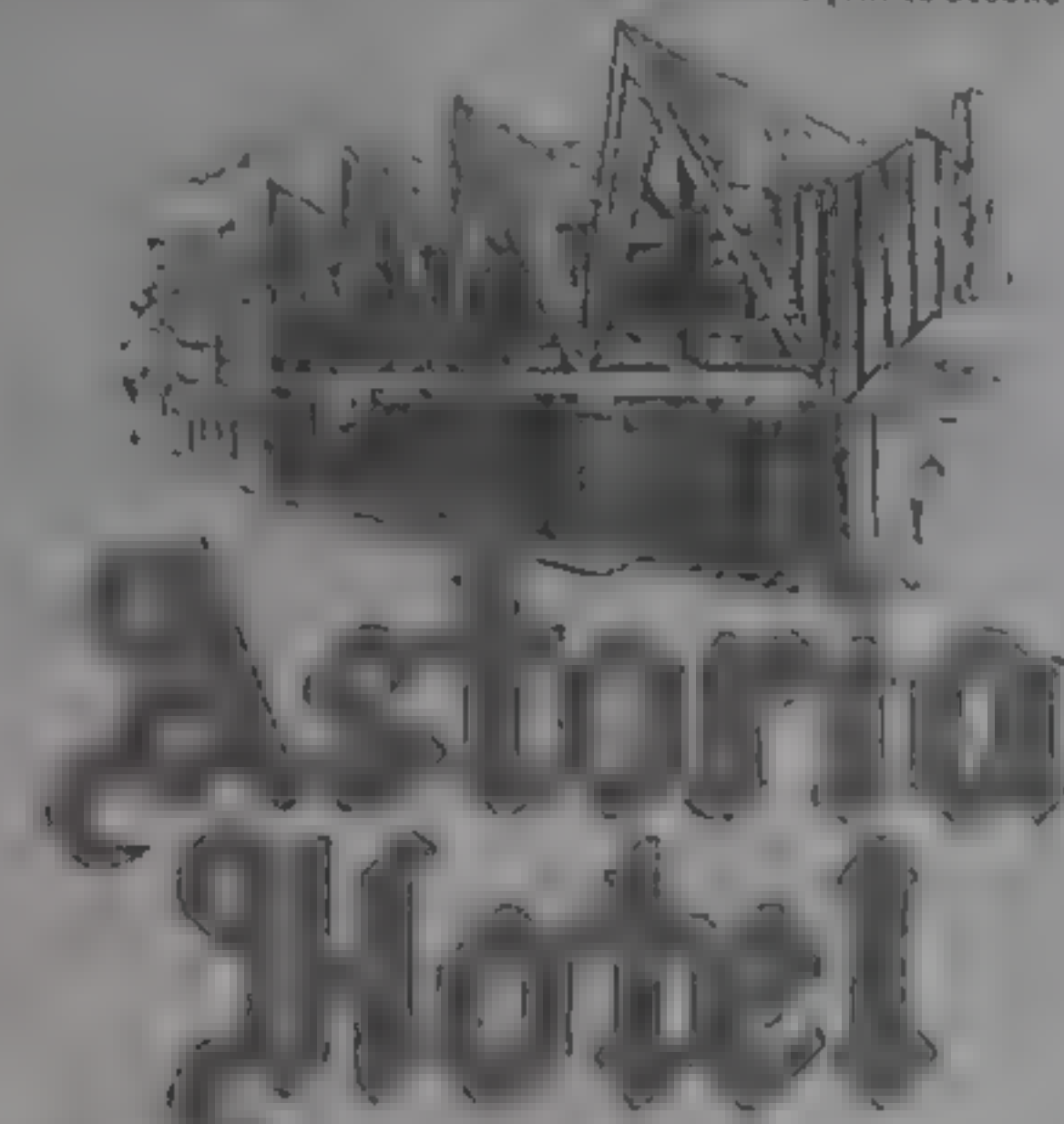
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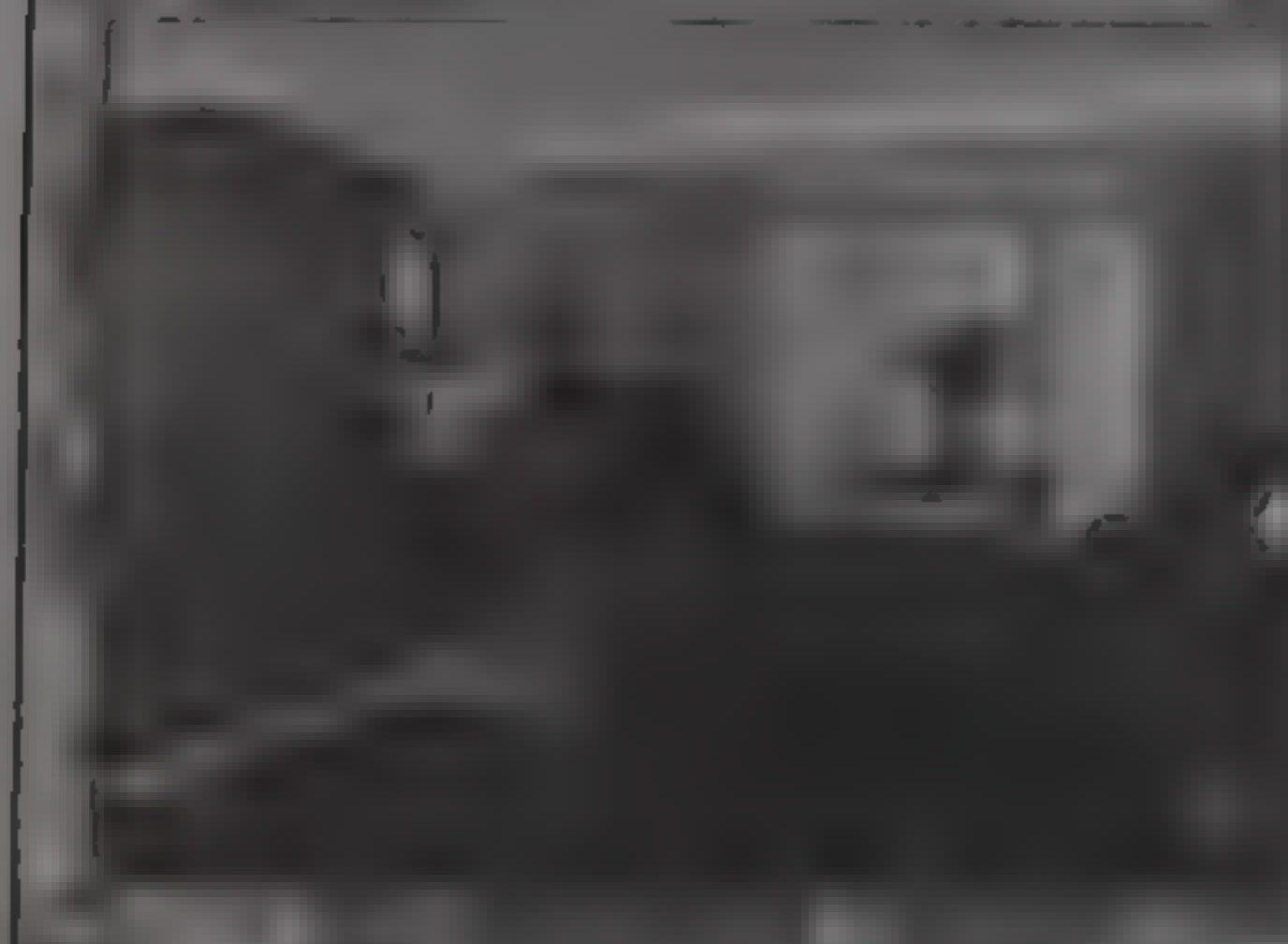
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CONDITIONS REPORT

Local

Bushy Hill — Closed for season.
Snow Valley — Closed for season.
Sun Ridge — Closed for season.
Edmonton Ski Club — Closed for season.

Alberta

Canada Olympic Park — Closed for season.
Castle Mountain — Closed for season.
Lake Louise — 156-180cm base, 4cm of new snow. 8 lifts and 132 runs open.
Marmot Basin — 114cm base, 8cm of new snow. 6 lifts and 83 runs open.
Mt. Norquay — 60-85cm base, 6cm of new snow. All lifts and runs open.
Nakiska — Closed for season.
Sunshine Village — 184cm base, 18cm of new snow. All lifts and runs open.
Tsawwassen — 60cm base, 10cm of new snow. All lifts and 23 runs open.

B.C.

Apex — Closed for season.
Big White — Closed for season.
Fernie — Closed for season.
Kicking Horse — 185cm base, 2cm of new snow.
Kimberley — Closed for season.
Mt. Washington — Closed for season.
Panorama — Closed for season.
Powder King — 363-520cm base, no new snow.
Red Mountain — 225cm base, no new snow. All lifts and runs open.
Revelstoke — 243cm base, 3 lifts and all trails open.
Silver Star — Closed for season.
Sun Peaks — 179-241cm base, 26cm of new snow. All lifts and runs open.
Whistler/Blackcomb — 265cm base, 14cm of new snow. 23 lifts and all runs open.
White Water — Closed for season.

U.S.A.

49 North — Closed for season.
Big Sky — 198-297cm base, 23cm of new snow.
Crystal Mountain — Closed for season.
Great Divide — Closed for season.
Lookout Pass — Closed for season.
Mt. Spokane — Closed for season.
Schneider Mt. — Closed for season.
Silver Mt. Resort — Closed for season.
Sun Valley — 71-210cm base, 14 lifts and 87 runs open.

All conditions accurate as of April 9, 2008



Jonesin' for snow? Try going south

KEITH LIGGET / keith@vuweekly.com

One by one the lifts in Alberta and BC are slowing to a stop. Whistler stays open, but if you want to avoid the ski and snowboard circus and still have plenty of snow, head down the pike to Mt Hood (skihood.com). At 3426 metres (11 239 feet), the fourth highest of the Cascade volcanoes and the highest point in the state of Oregon, Mt Hood effectively stops the incoming pacific moisture to provide massive amounts of snow.

On Apr 5, Mt Hood Meadows reported over five metres of settled

EXTEND YOUR SEASON

base and Timberline, just around the corner, reported 5.7 m, with over 18 m falling this winter to date. And it was minus five and snowing hard with over 30 cm the last 24 hours. So much for spring skiing. Winter reigns on Mt Hood.

Mt Hood Meadows keeps the lifts

running through April and on week ends in May for the die-hards. Timberline truly serves the hardcore set as the only year-round lift serviced ski area in North America, with a detachable quad at that.

Built in the 1930s, Timberline Lodge (timberlinelodge.com) is a classic of the day, worthy of its place on the United States national Historic Register. Stone and timber rule. Set right at timberline (obviously), its windows look out over the alpine to the summit 1700 m above.

Despite its attractive locale, in the

Jump into the Wild West at Sunshine Village

SNOW ZONE

FALL LINES

FRANK GONZA
 frank@sunshinevillage.com

Although Delirium Dive has been open for several months, until recently snow conditions have prevented Sunshine Village operations from opening its other extreme freeriding terrain. Last weekend, after a few more centimetres in the right areas and a confirmed stable snow pack, the gates of Wild West Freeride Zone were opened. Located on Goat's Eye Mountain, this terrain is not for the faint of heart, featuring three major rock-walled couloirs, steep crevices and cliffs including some over 30 metres. Just like Delirium Dive, there are some entry rules that are mandatory for all. You must be an expert skier or boarder equipped with a working ava-



lanche transceiver, a shovel and a partner with the same equipment. For those of you just looking, have a gander up Goat's Eye

station. Those white tracks on the granite are meant for riding, climbing and jumping. I think I'll just keep waiting for you to try it first. v



late '60s the owners scrambled for cash. They even set up a storefront in Portland to sell off the original furniture. Video games populated the lobby. Distressed by the state of things, the Konstamm family bought the operation and began a long-term renovation. Today Timberline Lodge, from the blankets on the beds to the dishes in the dining room, expresses the thoughtfulness and glory of the finer points of ski life in its early days. Stepping in the door is stepping back in time.

Skiing Oregon in the spring is a treat. There is so much more than skiing. The snow softens and becomes grippy at noon or so. At that point, drop off the mountain and head into Hood River (hoodriver.org). One of the fruit growing centers of North America, in April the orchards lie in pink and white blanket on the way into

The wind builds in the morning and by the time the snow is soft, it will be nuking on the river. The windsurfing is epic. If you don't windsurf, there are plenty of schools to get you ripping in no time.

Kiteboarding recently arrived on the scene. Stevenson (cityofstevenson.com), just down the river on the Washington side, is a friendlier spot for boarding. The river is wider, the wind steadier and the launch easier. At the end of the day, two easy blocks from the launch, the Walking Man Pub waits. Walking Man Brewing (walkingmanbrewing.com) wins awards at every beer festival they enter. The beer's exceptional, the food's great and the company friendly.

Or head over to Horsethief Bluff, a half-hour drive to the east of Hood River and climb. Literally miles of short basalt cliffs offer climbs for every ability.

Or ride. The mountain biking is epic. Fernie, my home, is renowned for mountain biking. Hood River/Stevenson offer every bit the terrain and single tracks of Fernie with 10 per cent of the riders. And none of the bears.

As a late season ski destination to dull the jones, few locations offer the variety of Mt Hood. It's not just skiing anymore. It's a life. ▽



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Nauman and Viola keep the humanity in their video projections

CELEBRATED AMERICANS HIGHLIGHT SERIES OF SHOWS REFLECTING MODERN ART AND MODERNISM

AMY FUNG / amy@vuwweekly.com

The incessant drill of Bruce Nauman's "Raw Material OK OK OK" (1990), part of the AGA's *Bruce Nauman and Bill Viola* show, is beyond irresistible. Try as you may, but its feverish entanglement of the disyllabic "OK OK OK" is delivered with a looping mechanic formality that does not lose its human comedy. There are variations in tones and deliveries, and the contextual meaning of "OK" gets left behind the longer you engage, but Nauman does not lose the human presence within a myriad of technology.

A projection-based work with a definitive sculptural element, "Raw Material OK OK OK" is as much a performance as it is sound art. As the next contemporary American artist to represent the United States at the Venice Biennial, Nauman has created a vast body of "Raw Material" audio works that include equally incessant and brilliant pieces "Work Work" and "Thank you." The bareness of the components in "OK OK OK"—the bodiless artist spinning, the recital of "OK" set to a loop—conjures a visceral barrage that externalizes an experience that preexists rather than alluding to the creation of a new experience. The physical spiraling of the artist echoes the perpetual loop of the work, and it is "the loop" that attempts to finish what Nauman doesn't ever intend to complete, and that is setting a finite experience of time and meaning. (One could only have wished for a lengthier exhibition space to encapsulate the cavernous echo and to not trip over fellow

AGA

UNTIL SUN, JUN 8

BRUCE NAUMAN AND
BILL VIOLAFEATURING "RAW MATERIAL OK OK OK" BY NAUMAN
"THE REFLECTING POOL" BY VIOLA
ART GALLERY OF ALBERTA (10230 JASPER AVE)

patrons pressed against the entrance.)

As a work of video projection, Nauman exploits the essence of video, and by extended lineage, cinematic formalities. A time- and light-based art that literally throws our shadows and demons against the wall, cinema and in turn, video art, share an ingrained ability to phenomenologically tantalize a captive audience. Rapture through the synchronization of a constructed image and sound has been formally discussed as that cinematic experience often prescribed as cinephilia, and there is an undeniable kinship between the early American experimental filmmakers such as Stan Brakhage and Paul Sharit in the 1950s that lends itself to the evolution of video art as relevant contemporary art in the '70s.

IN FINE COMPANY

"The Reflecting Pool" is certainly more meditative. A sad replacement for the originally scheduled "He Weeps For You," "The Reflecting Pool" is a very early example of Viola's engagement with multiple perceptions. The cycle of life is suggested, and Viola's life-long interest in water begins, but the curiosity in the technology overshadows the human presence. Known widely for rendering the tender moment of emotion, Viola, very much like Nauman, does not lose the



human essence through their use of technology. Although "The Reflecting Pool" does not quite have the same affect as Viola's more celebrated body of work, it reveals a rare glimpse into the artist's process.

Complementing the Canadian-centric "Projections" exhibit with two American artists that arguably attract far greater international recognition, it can only be garnered that new

media art still needs to be spoon fed on the local front to gain greater prominence. FAVA is questionable in its identity as a new media centre, though all signs would point to its foundation as potentially so. The importance in establishing and recognizing the importance of new media art is more than to just keep up with the times, but to diversify our insular definition of art. Video work is intrin-

sically adaptable to cross borders and in turn, engage in a larger network that can at once be local in context and international in scope. Traditional forms of visual art will never die, but the influence of the moving-image has been informing artistic practice since its inception into the mainstream nearly a century ago, and time we as audiences, artists and institutions stop resisting. ▽

Projections plays with light, layers and flickering meaning

MARY CHRISTA O'KEEFE / marychrista@vuwweekly.com

There came a point when so many museums and galleries were showing projection-based works as a regular part of their programming, it reached a critical mass, requiring a history to look at where it started and why it was relevant," explains Barbara Fischer.

A glimmer of *Projections* had danced in the University of Toronto based curator's mind since the mid 1980s, when it became clear a survey of the medium was needed to examine how film, video and slide technologies were being incorporated into the practices of two generations of artists. Fischer's background was in installation, and she was intrigued by the possibilities projection offered that

AGA

UNTIL SUN, JUN 8

PROJECTIONS

CURATED BY BARBARA FISCHER

branch of art. While even the most challenging experimental film was still essentially a passive experience for the viewer, projection transformed installation into something fundamentally different, layering another reality overtop an immediate physical environment and creating a more immersive encounter.

Berlin's Hamburger Bahnhof Museum produced a sprawling international overview of projection-based works over the winter of 2006/07, and Fischer realized *Projections* shortly afterwards, mounting a multi-site exhibition in Toronto that concentrat-

ed on Canadian artists, tracing the lineage from the earliest pieces to the work of recent practitioners.

The original version of *Projections* was more expansive than what's possible in the AGA's space. Fischer responded to the restrictions by favouring key historic pieces, several of which are now in the collection of the AGA, in the city, grouping them roughly chronologically and linking them thematically, providing a glimpse of the development of media as medium.

FISCHER TAKES US

begins with the manipulation of light with the first tentative steps into the medium mimicking or distorting time and space. Sunlight rises and falls in

both Ian Carr-Harris' and Gar Smith's pieces in patterns as cyclical as breathing; both are travelogues of light. Two works by Michael Snow show his puckish investigations of gaze and interpretation, bombardments of imagery or action that are almost psychoanalytic (bonus: full frontal Joyce Wieland and naturally bushy bush, from when women weren't expected to be hairless like a schoolgirl).

The projection becomes dioramic in Wyn Geleynse's frantic gerbil-like metaphor for diminished masculinity. Another of his elaborate dramatic tableaux (both are showstoppers). Some works are less installation than artifact, like photos of Krzysztof Wodiczko's architectural manipulations or

a Rodney Graham film canister, but still add context to the show.

Projected images have a haunting poeticism to them, whether moving still, abstract or representation. Pocket-sized or massive, narrative jumbled, colourful or in monochromatic shades—they're like mirage fantasies, dreams or hallucinations. They affect us viscerally because projection functions as a mirror of perception: we recognize them as kin to the broadcasts of our deepest selves, the movies of our minds as we navigate the world, internalizing and interpreting a malleable reality. The greatest thrill in *Projections* is to see the vernacular of consciousness manipulated to serve as a shared art. ▽

Seeing Through the foundations of Edmonton's art scene

MARY CHRISTA O'KEEFE / marychrista@vuwweekly.com

In inordinately flippant moments, I rationalize Edmonton's abiding attachment to Modernism—long after the rest of the planet consigned it to a vast, complex and important chapter in history books—as due to it being ideal art for the ostentatious: there's no explicit representational meaning to interpret or defend, naysayers can be warded off with opaque quasi-theoretical jargon and it goes with the couch. Modernist paintings and sculptures are usually massive, and compensatory mass goes over well in the land of sprawl malls, multi-story houses, all-you-can-eat buffets and oil-guzzling behemoths of the road. We even prefer our culture in big, festival-sized slabs.

But seriously: why is it that decades after Modernism ceased to hold sway as a current movement in London and New York, it still punches above its weight in a Canadian prairie boomtown?

Curator/cultural historian Anne Whitelaw delves into that crucial contextual question with *Seeing Through Modernism: Edmonton 1970-1985*. Divided into two spacious rooms, the exhibition explores the local ascension and entrenchment of the genre while also looking at the reaction it provoked in local artists whose work didn't fit the Modernist

AGA
UNTIL SUN MAY 4
SEEING THROUGH MODERNISM
CURATED BY ANNE WHITELAW

mould. This polarization, enabled by the two largest visual arts institutions in the city—the U of A and the AGA—still exerts pressure on our art scene.

The topic is the elephant in any weighty discussion of the history of art in Edmonton, whether in print (Mary-Beth Laviolette's books are particularly informative) or in exhibitions. AGA Assistant Curator/Public Programs Director Marcus Miller, newly arrived from Montréal, dealt with Modernism elliptically and playfully in his first show for the gallery, last year's *FLAT*, drawing a connection to übercritic Clement Greenberg's repeated visits to Edmonton (at a time when his power was waning at home in New York).

SEEING THROUGH MODERNISM has its roots in other exhibitions: Whitelaw, who came from Montréal in 1999 to teach at the U of A, curated an AGA show a couple years ago tracing the collecting focus of the gallery's directors throughout its history. She noticed a shift in the 1960s towards acquiring Modernist pieces—a daring aesthetic position for a public gallery at that junction of time and place. Her



curiosity was also piqued when she realized her students had little grounding in genres outside Modernism's scope (much of *Projections* is contemporaneous to *Seeing Through Modernism*, and worth comparison), and she wondered how such a specific aesthetic focus became the dominant discourse in the city.

Whitelaw's scholarly specialty is integral to the framing of the exhibition: "Looking at connections between institutions and art practices is important to see how they work together. I'm not engaging with Modernism so much as with the institution," she

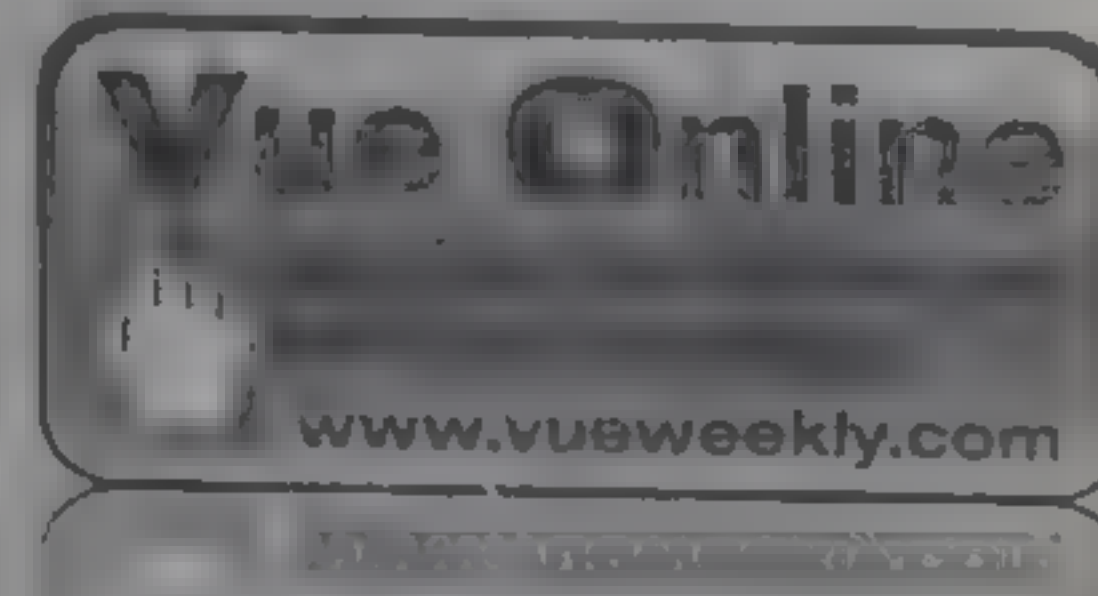
explains. "The majority of peoples' art experiences are mediated—we encounter art through museums, art history texts, classes, artist-run centres; our encounters with artwork happen through institutions. I'm trying to figure out how that happens and why that happens. More importantly, that story needs to be told."

Seeing Through Modernism certainly elucidates this history, using Whitelaw's intensive research into the governing minutiae of the AGA and alternative vehicles for local artists (Latitude 53, SNAP) to illuminate events and personalities that shaped our city's cultural

landscape. Decoupling Modernism from its overarching philosophy and parsing its meaning in a regional context lets us critically examine the legacy of the choices made by people heading our local art institutions.

Whitelaw's contribution to our collective understanding is far from condemnatory—she shows beauties in both the Modernist realm (like Phillip Darrah's gorgeous paperwork "Flutter" and Joseph Drapell's majestic "Young Earth") and in co-existing and reactionary genres (Manwoman's hippie drawings; an enigmatic kinetic chrome egg). Yet there's something disconcerting in the way our city's aesthetic character was hijacked to serve as a time capsule for mid-20th century Big Art values.

And the influence still lingers, evident even in the contours of the forthcoming AGA building. Our public gallery, by definition, belongs to all of us. What are we collecting now? Does it reflect our plurality, or are we still in thrall to the polarized template of the past? ▼



Mile Zero has the Ki

SHERRY DAWN KNETTLE / sherry@vuwweekly.com

Three dancers sit beside a heap of 20 or 30 sticks piled on the floor of Mile Zero Dance's tiny office, watching a video of themselves in a dance that casts dark shadows against a translucent, bright-coloured elliptical background.

Gerry Morita, Theresa Dextrase and Eryn Tempest, along with a crew of designers and technicians, have just returned from a three-day production residency at the Banff Centre where the stunning video was created as they worked on a complex lighting design involving shadow puppetry.

But there are no actual puppets in this new work, titled *Ki*. It's the dancers themselves who make the silhouettes, moving with a slow, steady pace to prevent the sticks, sometimes balanced on their heads, from toppling over.

It sounds strange but looks beautiful, and even Morita laughs about the concept.

"We were exploring a variety of movement images, so we just got all the sticks and started doing things with them," she says. "We ended up doing ballet with sticks on our heads."

The measured, steady movement is hypnotizing and exotic, reminiscent of tai chi or Japanese dance. Fittingly, then *Ki* is the Japanese word for tree, although the sticks themselves are from a Saskatchewan farm where Morita's father gathered up a truckload and sent them to her.



THE DANCE/PIECE explores art form and what would happen if trees became an endangered species and were, therefore very rare.

"They become precious objects to the point that they become status symbols. People wear tree hats to be cool," she says of what happens with some of the trees in the piece.

Morita also uses the work to address social concerns about our inability to do anything meaningful to save not only trees, but also the environment.

"People are not empowered to be able to change, and as a result, the world has come up with some absurd rituals that are completely ineffective with saving the planet,"

PREVIEW
THU, APR 10 - SAT, APR 12 (8 PM)
KI
PRESENTED BY MILE ZERO DANCE
TIMMS CENTRE FOR THE ARTS (87 AVE & 112 ST)
(TICKETS: \$22/\$18/\$12 FOR 1 SAT ONLY)

Morita explains, pointing out that the dance piece is also an example of the type of absurd rituals people have adopted. "Will just doing a ballet with trees on your head change the world or stop clear cutting?"

"We're hoping to get people to simply look at dance as a living, breathing art form, and to give them a really overall art experience," she adds. "*Ki* is like a piece of visual art, but with a pulse and a breath and movement." ▼

Bunting looks for faces in Cambodian tragedy

SHERRY DAWN KNETTLE / sherry@vuwweekly.com

A wall of light emerges through white curtains in a downtown studio as six dancers move slowly towards it, some-falling to the floor in a smooth, gliding motion. The others reach back to touch them, stretch upwards and continue to move towards the windows.

Although they're rehearsing for choreographer Heidi Bunting's new work, *Everything Has a Face*, only their backs are visible as we watch them.

"Front is whichever direction you're facing," explains Bunting, quoting modern dance pioneer Merce Cunningham, whose work has strongly influenced her choreography. As with Cunningham's, the element of chance is a major factor in Bunting's creations, and as a result the dancers move in and out of one another's worlds.

"There's not a lot of unison in my work; I call it poly-attentive," Bunting explains. "I like to believe the audience has to be coerced or forced into making a choice as to what they see. I'm not laying it out there for them, as if only one thing's happening. Maybe if you see it twice, you'll see two different dances. I've had many people tell me that."

"It's very geometric," she continues. "The spatial relationships combine with the flow of movement—it's all about dovetailing and how they weave

PREVIEW
FRI, APR 11 - SAT, APR 12 (8 PM)
EVERYTHING HAS A FACE
PRESENTED BY BUNTING DANCE
TIMMS CENTRE FOR THE ARTS (87 AVE & 112 ST)
\$25/\$15

in and out, like the cedar waxwings that we have in Edmonton."

DESPITE THIS uplifting description, the piece was inspired by a Cambodian museum, a schoolhouse used by Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge to house prisoners in the 1970s. The work is named for the victims' photographs, which now cover the building's walls, and for their skulls, very carefully placed on display in the nearby killing fields. But the work itself is not morose. Bunting takes a positive approach—it's about hope and light within the prison.

"The windows had shutters with louvers and the light would shine through and would make a pattern on the floor. And I loved that light," she says. "I believe in South East Asia you can actually see the particles of light. It has a very golden hue to it. That light offered the prisoners inside a sense of the world outside. And it gave them hope, because there wasn't a lot of hope. It allowed the people who were there to tell the time of day, to sense the passing of time."

"So that's what this piece is about," she adds. "Containment and light and, of course, the dancing." ▼

Some simple sympathy

DAVID BERRY / david@vuweekly.com

Jeremy Baumung has you right up until the time he clasps his hands and looks skyward. Once he begins uttering a prayer for the homeless, though, *Homeless*, the one-man play he wrote and stars in descends to a level of maudlin sentimentality best reserved for fridge magnets.

Fortunately for the play, this is the absolutely last thing that happens, and though it leaves a sour, schmaltzy aftertaste, it's not enough to erase what Baumung accomplishes during the rest of his hour on stage. Pulled from his own experiences working at the George Spady Centre, *Homeless* is as much a testament to his abilities as an actor as it is a moving and sympathetic portrayal of the life of people on the street.

What makes the ending even more frustrating is the fact that the rest of the play works so well precisely because Baumung avoids much in the way of excess throughout, preferring instead to present these people simply as they are, pock-marked physically and spiritually, occasionally helpless, frequently hopeless, but possessed of a quiet resilience, albeit one that would be quick to dwindle without the presence of the Centre. His portraits are so affecting precisely because he does not force our perspective on them, instead just letting them stand in front of us and leaving us to draw

REVUE

UNTIL SAT, APR 12 (8 PM)
HOMELESS
DIRECTED BY KENNETH GROW
WRITTEN & PERFORMED BY JEREMY BAUMUNG
LIVING ROOM PLAYHOUSE (11315-106 AVE); \$10

our own conclusions on the people he brings to life.

SOMEWHAT Less successful is *SOMEWHAT*, in which Baumung injects himself directly into the script, relating his own experiences and wondering what makes him so different from the people he admits every night at the Centre. His account of his own brief flirtation with meth—the George Spady is specifically for people with addictions—is meant to suggest that we're only a few small choices away from a similar life to the people here, and while it's an admirable attempt to engender sympathy, it comes off more as white liberal guilt, an attempt to draw parallels between his own socially cozy life and people who have been fairly relentlessly beat down by society, their family and their own conscience.

Luckily Baumung keeps these to a minimum, by and large letting the comings and goings of the characters, and their abject humanity, build our sympathies for them. And so long as he leaves us to come to our own conclusions, Baumung succeeds. ▼

Is this a doughnut I see before me?

PAUL BLINOV / blinov@vuweekly.com

Considering the zealous fandom that follows both *The Simpsons* and Shakespeare, Rick Miller's managed to find a pretty big happy medium with *MachOMER*, his weird, off-beat hybrid of the two. Now into its 12th year of casual touring, the play's been performed for audiences across three continents, and used as an educational tool to get students

PREVIEW

TUE, APR 15 - SUN, APR 20 (8 PM)
MACHOMER
WRITTEN, DIRECTED AND PERFORMED BY
RICK MILLER
BASED ON THE PLAY BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
TRANSLATED AND ADAPTED BY RICK MILLER
\$10 - \$20

interested in Shakespeare—not bad for an idea that Miller explains was simply a Macbeth cast party joke, dreamt up while he was playing Murderer #2 back in 1994.

MachOMER's even received the "whoo-hoo!" of approval from the *Simpsons*' creators themselves, who Miller met during the show's first international fringe stop in Edinburgh years ago.

"They were very, very encouraging; they could've really been pricks, but they were so generous with what I was doing," he laughs. "Matt Groening shook my hand. He said, 'I hear it's very funny, I haven't seen it,



send me a video, and I'll see what I can do to help Fox encourage you, in a way, and not to shut you down."

With that endorsement, any legal spots that could've ended *MachOMER*'s reign of yearly tours dissolved. Since those earlier days, the show's grown, changing from a more humble, Fringe-y endeavour—

"it had two lights: red for evil, white for not," Miller laughs about the initial run—to a fleshed out, fully Shakespearean production of the play.

IT'S NOT MILLER'S ONLY GIG, but although he's currently working on

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L'Uni's production of *Einstein* works in either official language

PAUL BLINOV / blinov@vnewsweekly.com

I have to confess: I can barely speak a word of French. What few sentences I'm capable of stringing together are nonsense, a random scattering of nouns I remember from elementary school—something to the incomprehensible tune of *le pomme et un bibliotechnique est bien*. So French theatre is impossibly off-limits to me, the forbidden fruit that I'm unable to even comprehend, let alone taste or draw intelligent thought from.

But taking inspiration from the cross-language successes of a sister company in Toronto, L'Uni Theatre has extended le olive branch to people like me, subtitled select performances of *Le Cadeau du Einstein* in English by projecting the lines up on one side of the stage—a concept that, although a little shaky in its first-time execution, holds great promise for the unilingual chumps like me experienc-

REVUE

THU, APR 10 - SAT, APR 12 (8 PM)
LE CADEAU D'EINSTEIN
 (EINSTEIN'S GIFT)
 DIRECTED BY DANIEL COMTOYER
 WRITTEN BY WINN THIESSEN
 TRANSLATED BY MANDY RABINOVICH
 STARRING MANUEL SINOR, MARGUERITE MONTY
 GILLES PUDON-BENET, RICHARD SALVA
 LA CITE FRANCOPHONE (8627-91 ST), \$15-\$23

ing the francophone side of theatre.

Einstein's Gift, while featuring the titular genius, actually focuses on the struggles of another man: Fritz Haber (Manuel Sinor), the brilliant German chemist whose real-life work on synthesizing nitrogen in the air into fertilizers earned him the Nobel Prize. But that little decal often gets overshadowed by his other, more notorious, contributions to the world: Chlorine gas and Zyklon B, an insecticide used



by the Nazis in concentration camps.

We get to follow—with surprising clarity, given the language barrier—his conversations with Einstein (Bernard

Salva), the women he met and loved and his struggle to make science applicable to saving lives, when his country wanted it for more insidious purposes.

THE TROOF OF LEADING MALES structure their historically weighted roles well. Sinor creates an excellent Haber, nicely arcing through confidence and frustration, and evoking both sympathy and disgust as he attempts to use his chemical knowledge to save loves, only to have it backfire when he lacks the spine to oppose his country's wishes.

His banter with Einstein is well done, a tribute to both Vern Thiessen's award-winning script and the actor's interpretations of it: even with my eyes racing up to projected words and back down to watch the actor's expressions, the emotion of their interactions were clear and easy to follow, from playful banter to heated arguments.

The subtitles, projected on one side

of the thrust stage, worked out well, though there were a few natural bumps along its maiden voyage: occasionally, dialogue remained unchanged for far too long for what was projected on the screen, or got caught up in a frantic moment, whipping on and off the screen at difficult-to-follow speeds. Also, in the few moments that *Einstein's Gift* actually gets into scientific jargon, it's unfortunately at this speedy pace; the technical terms might roll off the tongue, but they were overwhelming at the speed they flashed up on the screen at.

But those little mistakes felt more like first show jitters than genuine faults, and the show as a whole is a strong piece of theatre that's easy to understand via subtitles. With a little bit of experience in pacing, L'Uni Theatre could find their audiences swelling with theatre-goers who speak either of Canada's official languages. ▽

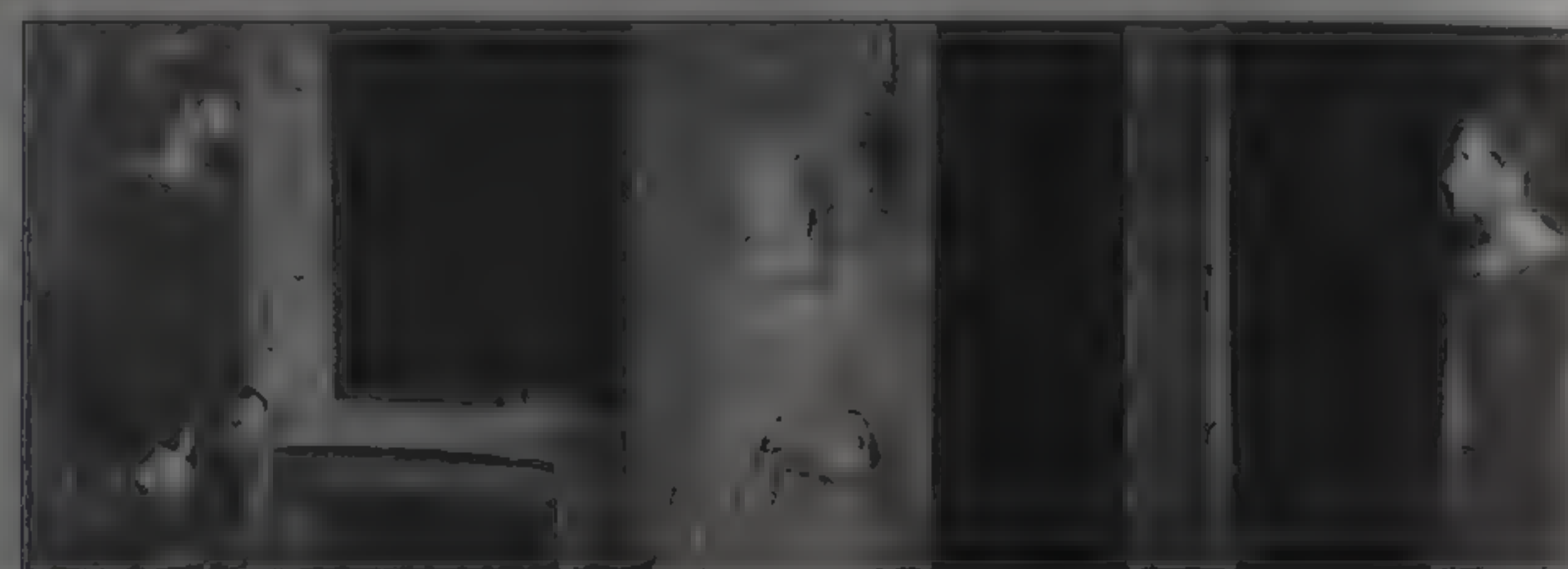
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Winter of our discontent

PAUL BLINOV / blinov@vnewsweekly.com

All of the diplomacy, violence and war that a royal family goes through in the name of its country can pale in comparison to the politics, bitter spats and intrigue that happen within bloodlines. The Walterdale's production of *The Lion in Winter* explores such regal family feuding by examining the Plantagenets, one of Britain's real monarchies, in a fictitious scenario.

At Christmas of 1183, King Henry, having yet to declare his heir to the throne, finds his house filled with plotting by his three sons, daughter and wife, who create, swap and tear down alliances in their quest for power.

"When you're dealing with four brothers and a sister, one is aware of alliances and friendships and so on, and one is closer with certain family members than others," director Alex Hawkins explains. "There seems to be a rivalry among the three brothers in general, but at different times one of the brothers will ally with another against the third, and the sister is the wildcard."

It was the strength and size of the ensemble piece that originally drew Hawkins to James Goldman's Tony-nominated script. While not overstuffed with characters, *The Lion in Winter* has all seven of them giving and taking the spotlight, instead of falling into the more usual protagonist-supporting characters-antagonist

"I've directed several plays that are very large cast, and I wanted to direct a play with smaller cast and

PREVIEW

THU, APR 10 - SAT, APR 12 (8 PM)
THE LION IN WINTER
 WRITTEN BY JAMES GOLDMAN
 DIRECTED BY ALEX HAWKINS
 STARRING JAN STREADER, KIERAN O'CALLAGHAN
 WALTERDALE PLAYHOUSE (10322-83 AVE)
 \$12-\$16

tighter construction, because it's a challenge for me," he explains. "Usually, you get a play with a smaller cast like this, and one character is the star, and the other characters are supporting [them]. But that's not the way this play works. We've got seven characters, all of whom have strong scenes with several of each other in different combinations."

THROUGH THESE historical characters play out fictional scenes, their inter-bickering isn't completely unfounded—the trio of brothers really did vie for their father's throne back in the day. And though murder and revolt might not be present in typical family's relationship—except, perhaps on a particularly cutthroat family game night—the little personal alliances that rise and fall are very real in any family dynamic.

"It sort of obeys the rule of three: never have three children, never put three people on the team, never put three people together to do a task because you'll always get two against one," he explains. "In this play, you have these three boys vying against each other for the affection of their mother, the queen of the time, for advantage. I think it can pertain to any family." ▽

Your cheating heart: *Orange Flower Water* gets under the skin of an affair

Though Wayne Paquette has many strengths as a director—not the least of which is a sharply intelligent but casually affable nature that comes out whether or not he's running scene suggestions by you—one of his biggest talents to date has been picking scripts. With Blarney Productions—the company he co-founded three years ago with acting veteran John Sproule—he has brought Edmonton's Fringe some of its sharpest, most refreshing plays of the last few years, from the meta-character ruminations of *Afterplay* to the piercing humanity of *The Christian Brothers* (both of which garnered Paquette Outstanding Director Sterlings) to the swirling relationship drama of last year's *Madagascar*, Paquette has ensured that Blarney is synonymous with thoughtfully provocative modern theatre.

That trend continues with his first foray on to the seasonal mainstages, Craig Wright's *Orange Flower Water*. Following an extramarital affair as it inches inexorably towards hitting the light of day, the play is a slow-burning, incisive look at the consequences of relationships on the people in them, a play more visceral and ambiguous than most that come across Edmonton's stages.

For his part, Paquette is glad to be bringing something that pushes people out of their comfort zones in the theatre, something he freely admits—somewhat anachronistically for someone as, if not exactly meek, then certainly reserved as Paquette—has been a goal of his since he and Sproule first got Blarney going.

"There's stuff in this play that I don't think people have seen a lot of," he says with an earnest thoughtfulness, though he also stresses that, as much as it approaches them differently, the play deals with familiar ideas and themes. "I definitely relate to the strug-



PREVIEW THU, APR 10 - SUN, APR 13 (8 PM)
ORANGE FLOWER WATER
DIRECTED BY WAYNE PAQUETTE
WRITTEN BY CRAIG WRIGHT
STARRING JESSE GERVAIS, TWILLA MACLEOD,
TRACY PENNER, MARK STUBBINGS
VARSCONA THEATRE (10329 - 83 AVE); \$15/\$20

gles of the characters—which is how I usually pick plays, actually. These are people sitting on the cusp of childhood and adulthood, and the play really looks at what that brings, and how people look at you when you're at that point, and what it means to become respected and responsible."

DEALING WITH life's inescapable changes seems to be a theme particularly close to Paquette's heart, from *Afterplay*'s displaced theatrical characters to *Christian Brothers*' troubled priest. In *Orange Flower Water*, that change is explored through the affair carried on by David (Jesse Gervais) and Beth (Tracey Penner); as much as it is a meditation on love and interpersonal relationships, it's also an exploration of increasing responsibility, as the toll the affair takes on their day relationships begins to weigh on them, and they're forced to face the

consequences of a choice that, despite more standard morality, might actually be the right one to make.

For Paquette, this is a poignant dissection of the choices we all have to make as we grow up and (presumably) become more responsible: eventually we have to come to terms with the fact our choices affect other people, and not always in the way we'd like.

"I think, hurting people is something we don't want to do, but it just happens as much as you want to be a good person and make the right choices, ultimately you have to make choices for yourself, you have to look out what's best for you," he explains. "It's messy, and nothing in life is easy choices, but it's all about your choices, in the end."

"You choose this and it's going to lead down this road, and if you go down that road, you're going to be hurting people," Paquette continues. "Everyone in the play gets to a place of learning something new. They get to a place where they go, 'I've made choices for myself, but I have a responsibility to other people, I accept other people.' There is a cause and effect: you have to look after other people, sometimes they need that. That's a big thing about accepting responsibility, and it's not an easy choice at all." ▼

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MACHOMER

by Craig Wright

another project—a colossal, collaborative *nine hour* epic production entitled *Lipsynch*—he's still content to take *MachOMER* out on the road a few times a year.

"I think *MachOMER* captures a bit of a spirit of Shakespeare that a lot of productions I've seen don't have," he explains. "A lot of people don't really realize [it], but Shakespeare 400 years ago was popular culture. He was what people would talk about, as opposed to what was on TV last night. He just wasn't the kind of guy who people would look at with this awe and reverence."

"[Shakespeare's work] was down and dirty, it was a rowdy environment, and it was much more like a production of *MachOMER* than the kind of environment where I've seen Shakespeare, which is often very quiet, theatre where people don't really understand anything, and they clap politely." ▼

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Amis sifts through the rubble of 9/11

BOOKS | HOPSCOTCH JOSEF BROWN hopscoth@vancouverweekly.com

If the numerous figures wrangled together under the big top of global intelligentsia, certain novelists among them, desire to distinguish their two cents from the clamour of collective pocket change, it mightn't hurt to allow themselves to change their minds now and then, or at least develop their positions through time and experience, however subjective or limited that experience may be. If his various opponents have any single bone to pick with Noam Chomsky, for example, it's that he appears to have the same response to everything. For many of us not graced with similar certainty, there's something persuasive about thinkers who make some attempt to regularly tend to their thoughts, to bring to their ideas a sort of narrative that we can track, a path we can follow and perhaps more easily identify with.

Turning the development of political convictions into narrative seems to be the underlying point of *The Second Plane: September 11: Terror and Boredom* (Knopf, \$29.95), the new collection of previously published writing by Martin Amis addressing, through essay, fiction and book or film criticism, the new challenges of life after that fateful "day of de-Enlightenment." Arranged in chronological order, the last entry written only last September, the pieces convey something of Amis's wrestling with man's capacity for darkness, violence, tedium and self-delusion, all themes that, were it not for 9/11, would otherwise signal just another day at the office for the author of *London Fields*, *Time's Arrow* and *Koba the Dread: Laughter and the Twenty Million*. Okay, "wrestling" may be too fraught a term—Amis, as always, never sweats all that much under the heatlamp of heavy consideration—but he does in fact think out loud and articulately, resulting in a highly valuable read.

In "The Second Plane," written only a week after 9/11, Amis writes how for "thousands in the South Tower, the sec-

ond plane meant the end of everything. For us, its glint was the worldflash of a coming future." In "The Voice of the Lonely Crowd," written in June 2002, the future begins to form a network of links to the past that were perhaps not so easily discernable in 9/11's immediate aftermath, and the links keep highlighting the role of religion. While Amis separates his stance from that of "humanist pit bulls" like Richard Dawkins (*The God Delusion*) and Christopher Hitchens (*God is Not Great*)—Amis is a humbly confessed agnostic, rather than a tough-talking atheist—he begins to examine what he sees as the fundamental dangers of religion. And Amis being Amis, he's not preoccupied with niceties.

"The twentieth century ... has been called the age of ideology. And the age of ideology, clearly, was a mere hiatus in the age of religion, which shows little sign of expiry. Since it is no longer permissible to disparage any single faith or creed, let us start disparaging all of them. To be clear: an ideology is a belief system with an inadequate basis in reality; a religion is a belief system with no basis in reality whatever. Religious belief is without reason and without dignity, and its record is near-universally dreadful ... if God existed, and if he cared for humankind, he would never have given us religion."

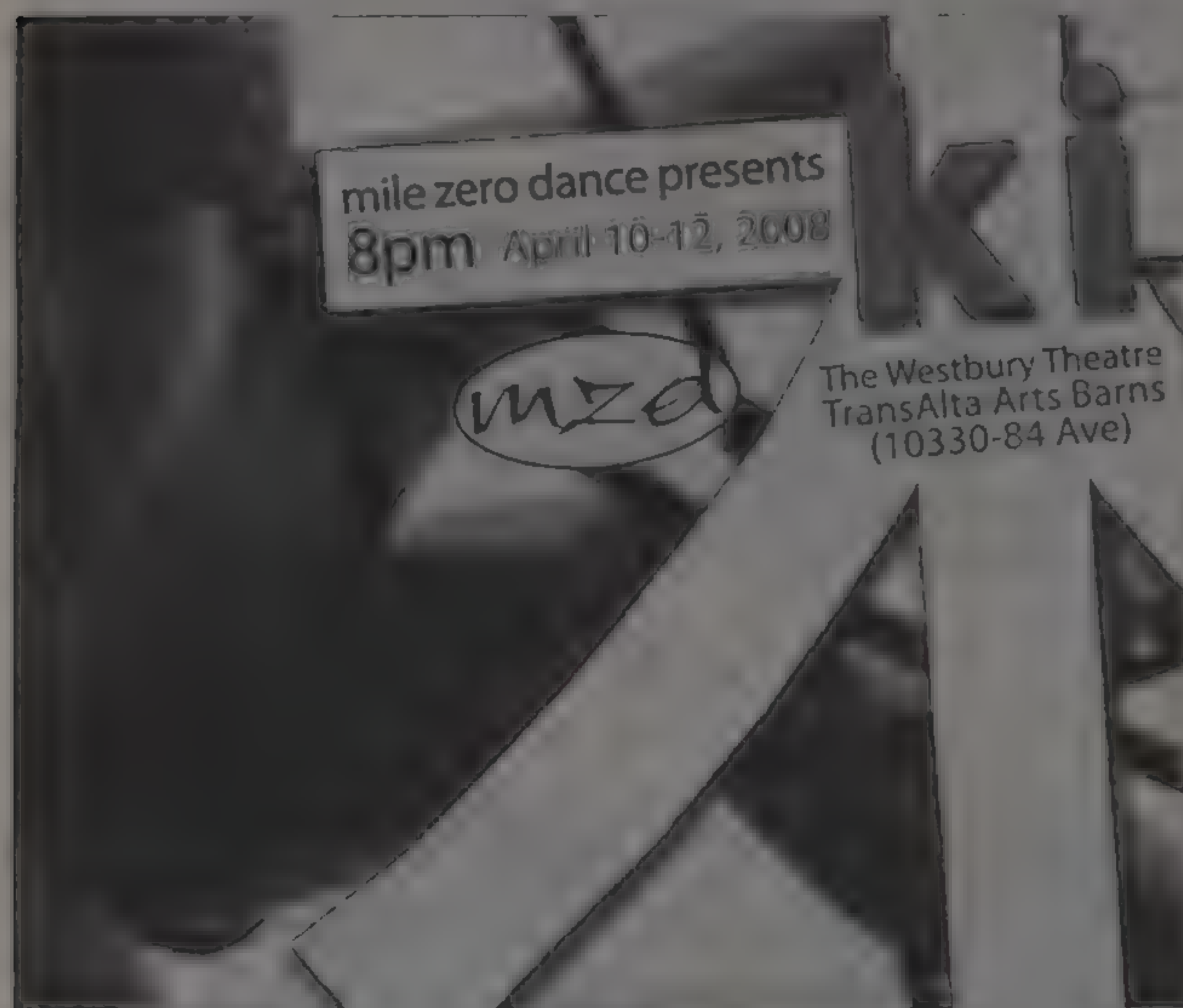
AMIS MAKES some more refined distinctions in "Terror and Boredom: The Dependent Mind," written in September 2006: between Muhammad, who "no serious person could fail to respect," and Muhammad Atta; between Islam, "the donor of countless benefits to mankind," and Islamism, "a creedal wave that calls for our own elimination." To be sure, Amis seems less concerned with excusing religious moderates from his attack on extremists than with directing our attention to the ways in which religious rhetoric, along with the new boredom of life burdened with arbitrary security measures, injects all post-9/11 powers with tacit permission to stop thinking. To put it another way, whichever side you're on, so long as God's on it, you're allowed

to be a bloodthirsty idiot.

Amis has been taking a lot of flak for what some have deemed his hateful, anti-Islamic attitude, an accusation that, once you actually read his work, can be seen as just a form of media-based bullying, an attempt to mob Amis into a corner, one cohabited by a truckload of right-wingers that would no doubt make for some rather uncomfortable chit-chat. Amis is openly hostile to the Bush administration—another house of destructive religious piety—and only friendlier to Blair by comparison. He's hardly on side with the invasion of Iraq—see "The Wrong War"—but he's willing to put things in some perspective. He declares the invasion of Iraq was not "wholly dishonorable."

"This is a more complicated, and more familiar, kind of tragedy. The Iraq War represents a giant contract, not just for Halliburton, but also for the paving company called Good Intentions. A dramatic (and largely benign) expansion of American power seems to have been the general goal; a dramatic reduction of American power seems to be the general outcome. Iraq is a divagation of what is ominously being called The Long War. To our largely futile losses in blood, treasure, and moral prestige, we add the loss in time; and time, too, is blood."

Amis may be going a little too far out of his way (benign?) to avoid being lumped with the camp of the ineffectual Left that welcomes conspiracy theorist pundits, but his perspective is far more nuanced than any voluble variation on "stuff happens." Above all, Amis keeps his eye on a bottom line peopled with mass murderers, whose culpability can't finally be diminished by arguments of how the US had it coming. Throughout *The Second Plane*, and perhaps most especially in the fiction pieces—one of which imagines the final days of Muhammad Atta, a story that functions nicely as a sort of companion piece to the alternating chapters in Don DeLillo's *Falling Man*—Amis keeps coming back to the sheer banality of sexually repressed, fleetingly inspired evil, seeing nothing noble or righteous anywhere in its vicinity, only something sad, deadly and all too familiar. **V**



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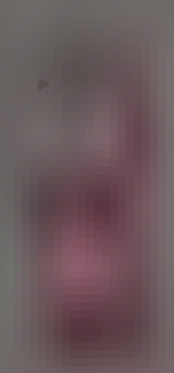
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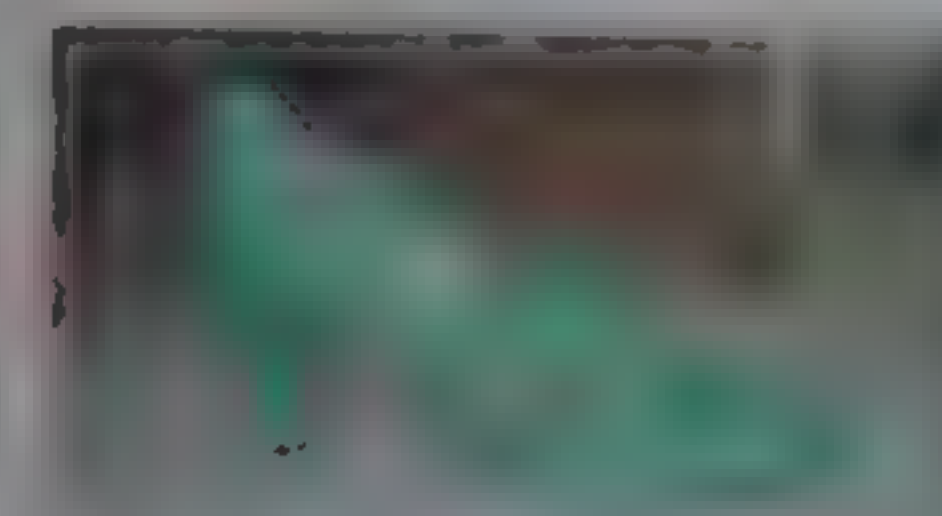
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The Pop of Colour Shoe: Zing It Up

Colour is the hot story for spring. At the very least, your shoe repertoire must include one pair of shiny red shoes to wear with dark-washed jeans and set off your wardrobe basics. But don't be afraid to venture into green, blue, orange, or even yellow to punch things up. Customer Tammy Kobliuk, a born-again shoe hound, says she has a full rainbow of colours in her closet. "I wear a different pair of shoes every day at work. It's nice to work where people appreciate shoes!"



Gidget green patent pump by Bos & Co, \$91 (with CS client card)

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Bos & Co quilted ballerina shoes in white, silver or black \$45 (client card price)

Look for a retro inspired ballet flat by Geox, \$117 (client card price) actually returned another pair of shoes because she fell head over heels in love with it!

The Metallic Shoe: Add Some Sparkle

According to C'est Sera manager Tracy Linkletter, "Patent – and even metallics – are quite strong for the day." It's easy to wear this season's metallic flats with capris or a cute walking short. A sparkly shoe with a heel is also appropriate for day wear – try mixing it with dark jeans or a playful jersey-knit dress. Naturally, you'll want to add even more shimmer for your night on the town!



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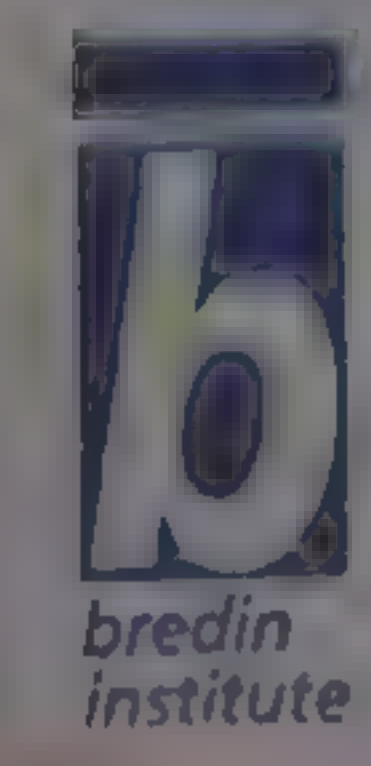
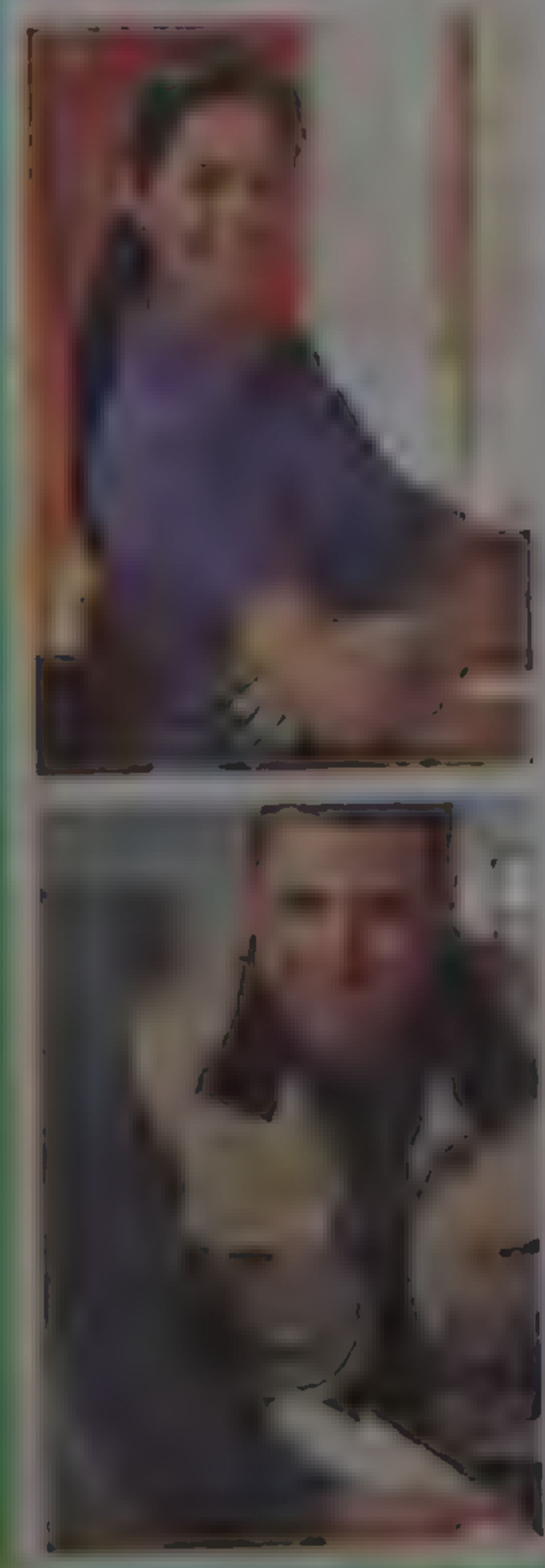



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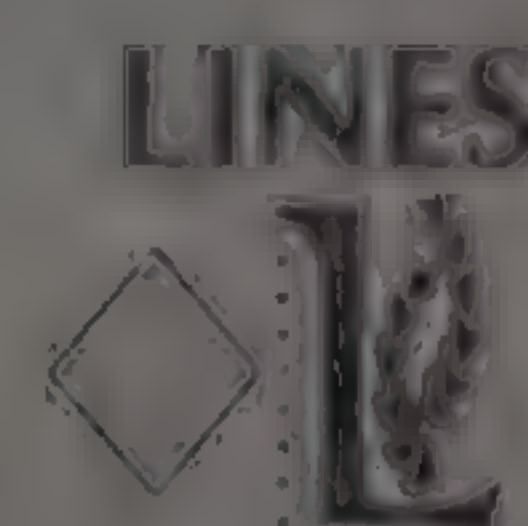
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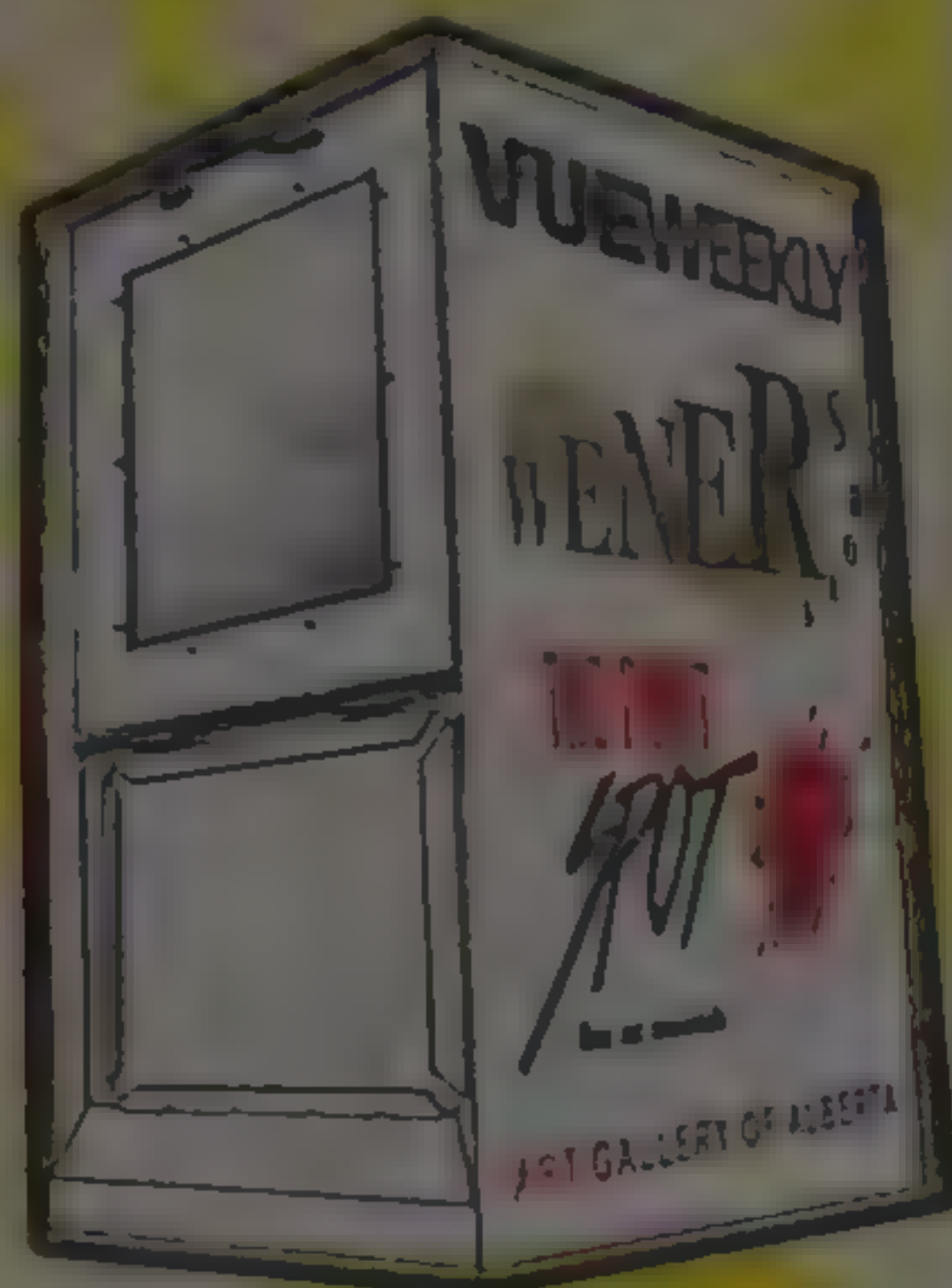
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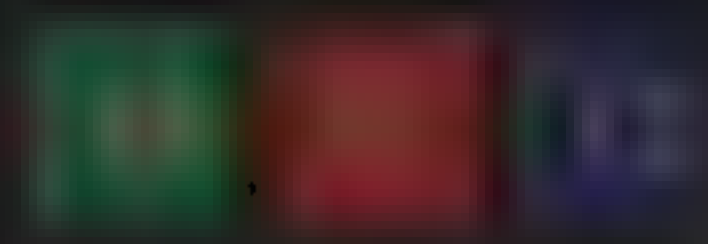
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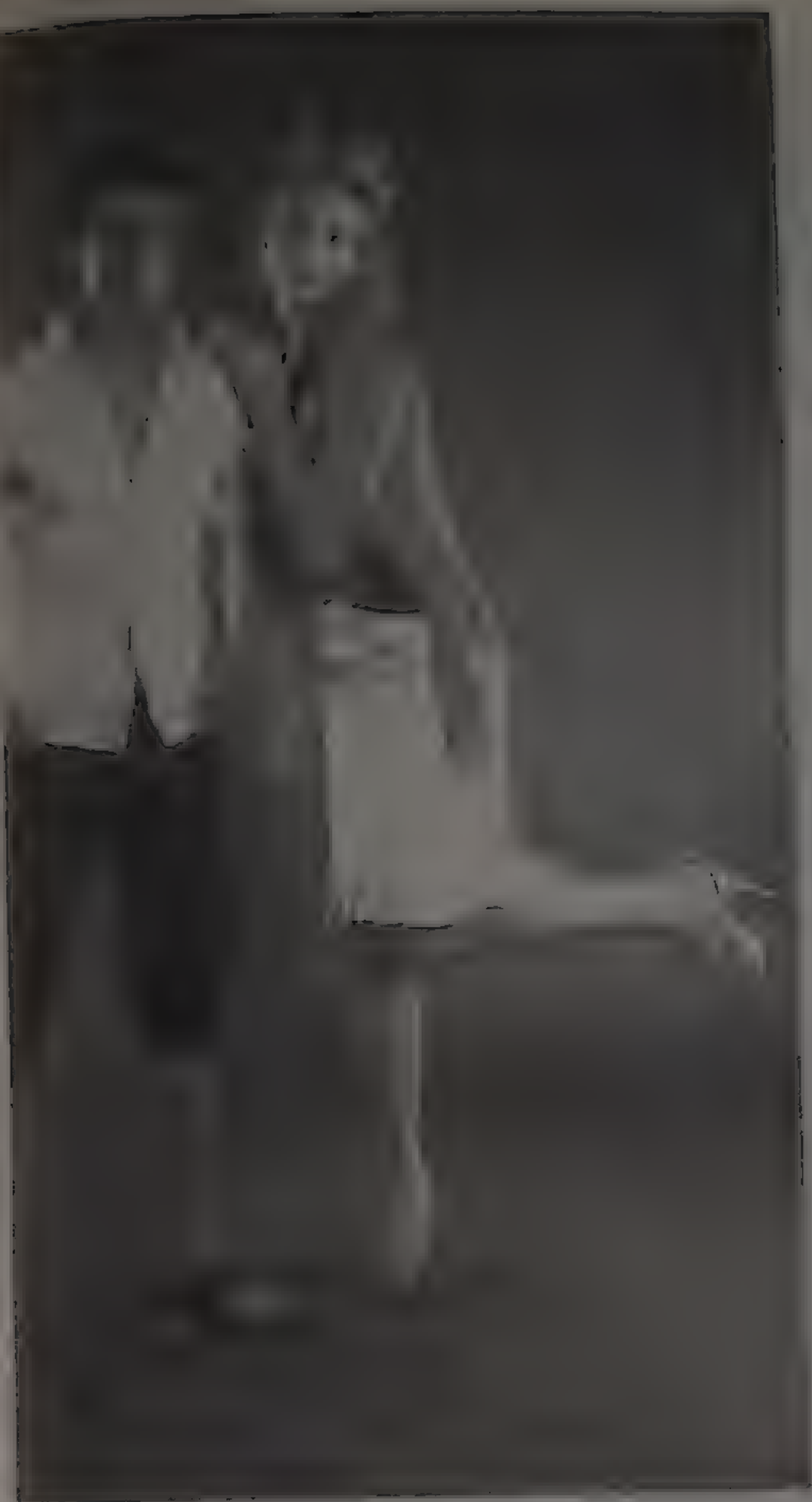


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This is Joe Strummer: Temple idolizes the Clash frontman

JOSEF BRAUN / josef@vueweekly.com

If we're to take a hard line about it, if we want to get purist and all, the very notion of a punk rock icon should rightfully be a sort of aberration, a betrayal of punk rock sensibility. Punk rock thrives on something like anonymity, on its participants' willingness to submit their identities to an attitude that makes articulation or nuance highly precarious. Punk rock iconography allows for symbols, certainly—a crudely drawn "A" for Anarchy, a provocative, gravity-defying haircut, hell, maybe a middle finger—but as soon as you turn an individual into an icon things get complicated.

Those seeking evidence of this conundrum need look no farther than Joe Strummer, the late, great frontman of the Clash and subject of Julian Temple's *Joe Strummer: The Future Is Unwritten*. Long after the first fires of punk burned out, after corporate co-opting and the transformation of punk rock into a marketing-friendly commodity, Strummer remained. Now that he's gone, following a heart attack at the appallingly young age of 50, dissection of Strummer's life renders him far more human than even a crappy mid-career album. A quick survey of his biography reveals a young man who baldly emulated Woody Guthrie, who later developed this deep affection for campfires and their tribal vibe. In short, this king of



punk was a goddamned hippy.

Of course, any veteran fan of Strummer's already knows most of this stuff and likely came to terms with it long ago. Though it's highlighted by some brilliant, invaluable archival footage—Temple met and shot the Clash at the beginning of the group's career—what distinguishes Temple's film isn't so much the biographical facts it digs up as the impressive parade of friends, cohorts, admirers

and commentators he's assembled to pay tribute to Strummer. The end result inevitably transcends the philosophical dictates of punk to show us how Strummer's influence is pan-genre, pan-cultural, pan-ideological.

STRUMMER WAS BOTH a seductive, shrewd, ruthless businessman and a genuine musical stylist who, prompted to change his style after witnessing the birth of the Sex Pistols, nurtured

DOCUMENTARY

FRI, APR 11, SUN, APR 13, TUE, APR 15 (7 PM)
SAT, APR 12, WED, APR 16 (9 PM)
JOE STRUMMER: THE FUTURE IS UNWRITTEN
DIRECTED BY JULIAN TEMPLE
FEATURING MICK JONES, BONO, JOHNNY DEPP,
CLAY AARON, AND OTHERS
★★★★

his public persona. He was an artist of deep political convictions that at times sat uneasily with his art and the industry it became increasingly shaped by. He was a wandering spirit, a dreamer, a drinker, a druggie and a dad. He helmed some of the best rock records ever made, yet was also capable of mediocrity and seemed excessively impressionable to passing fads. He was a pretty kick-ass DJ, and his radio show narrates the film. He was, finally, an irresistible presence, and what Temple gradually conveys is that most people, whether they knew him or just his music, couldn't help but love the guy. You'll likely walk away from the film loving him, too.

Temple's long, prolific career as director encompasses countless music videos as well as films as diverse as *The Filth and the Fury* and *Earth Girls Are Easy*. Imminently adaptable, Temple has used his friendships and diplomatic skills to wrangle up a star-studded guest list to sit around the fire and talk Strummer. You get the impression that some of

the bigger names only made the final cut to satisfy financiers. Comments from the likes of Martin Scorsese, Jim Jarmusch—an über-fan who directed Strummer in *Mystery Train*—Steve Buscemi, and the ubiquitous Bono (yes, Bono) all provide insightful, passionate testaments to the contradictions and the particular genius of Strummer. Others, well, don't fare as well. Johnny Depp: terrific actor. Musical commentator? Not so much.

Anyway, I can quibble, but overall *The Future Is Unwritten* proves itself indispensable to any viewers with even a passing interest in popular music from the last 40 years or so. It's not especially innovative in its style, but it is smart, mostly unsentimental, at times satisfyingly visceral, and utterly attuned to both the thrill and the provocation inherent in the music. There's a terrific Silver Jews song that features the lyric "Punk rock died when the first kid said 'Punk's Not Dead ...'" Reflection such as that found in *The Future Is Unwritten* assures us that yes, punk, the real thing is indeed dead. But the spirit that animated punk is very much alive, and it charged at least one life with the strength to go on one hell of a musical adventure. ▽

[Editor's Note: the Mon, Apr 14 screening of both *Joe Strummer: the Future Is Unwritten* and *Normal* (review on page 56) at Metro Cinema have been cancelled due to scheduling conflicts.]

Mini-series prove Sopranos didn't sing HBO's last song

FLICKS

DVDETECTIVE
BRIAN GIBSON
dvdetective@vueweekly.com

Reports of HBO's demise have been greatly exaggerated. When Carolyn Strauss recently stepped down as the company's entertainment president, the press brayed on about Showtime, F/X and AMC catching up as the post-*Sopranos* pay-cable godfather aired flops and low-raters.

Except that, like most of its shows, HBO doesn't conform to this easy storyline. Buzz and viewing numbers may be down, but the content is as strong as ever. *Big Love* is a fascinating nuclear family test site. *In Treatment* delivered an emotional body blow every episode, and that other therapy show, *Tell Me You Love Me*, was a deeply underrated, minimalist dissection of love and sex. On the lighter side, *Curb Your Enthusiasm* still goes strong and *Flight of the Conchords* is a quirky cult hit. And from *Longford* to *Elizabeth I*, HBO's put out some strong TV films and mini-series, as two new DVD releases prove yet again.

Pu-239 (The Half-Life of Timofey Berezin) is adapted from Ken Kalfus's short story and directed by Scott Z Burns, a producer of *An Inconvenient Truth* and screenwriter for *The Bourne Ultimatum* (with Tony Gilroy, writer-director of *Michael Clayton*; George Clooney and Steven Soderbergh are co-producers here). Unsurprisingly, then, this is an environmentally minded, politically charged thriller.

Like *Clayton*, *Pu-239* begins with a startling scene, then rewinds two days. Unlike *Michael Clayton*, though, justice and happy endings are harder to come by here. That's because here is 1990s Russia, a world where old-crony, party-hack communism's been replaced by a near-lawless, sell-out-everything capitalism. The blackly humorous epigram at the film's opening sets the tone for a black-market world where people are driven to desperation, to acts of absurd negligence, life going at rates so cheap it's almost laughable.

The comedy comes in the form of Shiv (Oscar Isaacs), a street hustler in Moscow who, with two doltish, thuggish pals, screws up a shakedown and owes a crime boss \$6000. Only in post-Soviet, street-

cowboy-capitalism Russia could this underworld element collide with a nuclear technician as reckless demand meets dangerous supply. Timofey Berezin's (Paddy Considine) been fatally contaminated by an accident at his plant, for which his corrupt superiors lay him off under threat of further punishment if he brings in any outside authorities. Dying, and wanting only to provide his wife (Radha Mitchell) and son with money, Berezin goes to Moscow to sell some weapons-grade plutonium he's stolen. There he meets the equally nothing-to-lose Shiv.

Isaacs is especially good (though the absence, as in *Eastern Promises*, of English-speaking Russians in the cast is both politically hypocritical and jarring—Mitchell's accent, in particular, wavers) and his Shiv becomes irradiated with a harsh, tragic pathos. Two monologues, the only obvious debts to the literary source material, offer intricate metaphors. And the way that life ends with a whimper, not a bang, in a Russia even more fissured by self-interest—everyone looking for their piece, for their way out, how to gouge, rip off and get by any way they can—is heartbreaking.

FAR AWAY from post-communist Russia, *Five Days* follows ripples from the ghostly wake of a woman's disappearance: Day 1, when Leanne Wellings vanishes on a by-road near an expressway while her children wait for her in the car; Day 2, as the police investigation kicks off under Superintendent Barclay's (Hugh Bonneville) lead; Day 28, as Leanne's husband Matt (an outstanding David Oyelowo) still waits for news on his birthday; Day 33, with Matt and Leanne's respective parents losing hope; Day 79, when head detective Amy Barclay (Janet McTeer) retires just as there's a break in the case.

This BBC-HBO co-production is a satisfying, gripping whodunit, but it's most haunting in its hows and whys. The eerie threat of open spaces, even in a country chock-a-block with CCTV cameras, pulses through the first episode as Leanne and Matt's little girl and boy find themselves alone. A delayed, frozen grief sets in. *Five Days'* greatest achievement is the feeling it builds of Matt's not-knowing battling with hope—but as days pass, "it's hope I can't bear." Matt, the object of suspicion not only because he's the husband but

because he's black, simply wants to "get on with the sheer hard work of grief."

This study of a multicultural, surveillance-laden England also pulses with an underlying distrust of an overworked, PR-driven police force that's a necessary social burden. Writer Gwyneth Hughes—perhaps influenced as much by her doc on the error-ridden hunt for the Yorkshire Ripper as the recent police travesties of the Stephen Lawrence case and the murder of Jean Charles de Menezes—offers a story where it's neighbours, friends, even reporters who happen upon the truth.

There are a few precious touches and some characters, especially the women—whose anxieties and social pressures still come across indelibly—remain not just messy, but a touch awkward. Yet *Five Days* offers a sense of family fractured, of people isolated and lost in their pain that's rarely seen on film or television these days. And it turns away from the old-guard, military and policing way of doing things to a modern-day, loosely knit patchwork of an England where families even frayed to the breaking point, are the force that can regroup and march on. ▽

Not that important, but still a nice Visit

55 D24.4 / josef@vuwweekly.com

Dressed from cap to pant cuff in a spotless powder blue, an all-male group of mostly older Egyptian musicians, practitioners of a classical style that's entered its cultural twilight, arrive in Israel, where they're booked to perform a modest concert. Confused, and suffering serious linguistic handicaps, they mean to go to one town and accidentally wind up in another, one so sleepy it's practically inert. Mid-day, its citizenry are found catatonically propped up on chairs in front of what may very well be the only café. With no means of transportation available until the following day, the musicians, entirely dependent on the kindness of these locals, have no choice but to spend the night.

The café proprietor is Dina (the terrifically vivacious Ronit Elkabetz), an almond-eyed knockout divorcée somewhere in the neighbourhood of 40 who tends to survey everything with a baldly sexy, cockeyed skepticism, often with one hand on her hip. She feeds the group, then arranges accommodations for them all. With considerable, hormone-fuelled persistence, she talks the impossible gentlemanly, droopy-nosed bandleader Lieutenant-colonel Tawfiq Zacharya (Sasson Gabai) out for a night on the town. Meanwhile, Haled (Saleh Bakri), the band's youngest and most subordinate member and a self-styled Don



FOREIGN

OPENS FRI, APR 11
THE BAND'S VISIT
WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY ERAN KOLIRIN
STARRING SASSON GABAI, RONIT ELKABETZ,
SALEH BAKRI
★★★★

Juan, is whisked away to a cramped roller rink that serves as the town's disco, where he plays Cyrano to a timid young nerd and his weepy blind date in a marvelous scene of purely physical comedy

Most of the Egyptians and Israelis can at least communicate in the lingua franca of broken English—which offers a surplus of comic delights for Anglophone audiences. When Haled sings Chet Baker through Plexiglas to a pretty girl held captive in the airport's info booth, there's the doubled pleasure of our recognizing both the mangled spoken words and the song being sung. But central to our understanding of the scenario is the fact that everyone knows "My Funny Valentine," that is,

they know the feeling, the cadence, the song's usefulness as a seductive tool. Later, an uncomfortably assembled group huddles around a dinner table and breaks into an ensemble rendition of "Summertime." Gradually, it becomes clear that the other lingua franca spoken here is music. It can't resolve conflicts, change anyone's course or alleviate the banal frustrations common to nearly all the characters—something one of them describes as "tons of loneliness"—but it can provide fleeting connections between strangers in the night

THE CINEMA of dislocation that is the melancholy-comic terrain traversed in *The Band's Visit* (*Bikur Ha-Tizmoret*) has found a worthy cartographer in writer/director Eran Kolirin, here making his feature debut. Previous travelers along this particular road include Aki Kaurismäki, Sophia Coppola, Takashi Kitano and Jim Jarmusch, whose *Stranger Than Paradise* so emphatically subverted any exoticism once associated with the road movie a quarter century ago. The trick to charting your way through this meta-country is to light one's gaze upon the specifics of a place while carefully rendering it not quite anywhere

The arid Israeli backwater where the Alexandria Ceremonial Police Orchestra accidentally find them

selves is imbued with a wealth of rich detail to help define it, yet it nonetheless feels like a locale that's managed to slip off the maps: forgettable, insignificant, a footnote in a travel guide. Insignificance is of course essential to this sort of movie, which vies for its status right from the opening title card, informing us about the band's visit before qualifying this with "not many remember this. It was not that important."

It would be all too easy to characterize *The Band's Visit* as a slavish exercise in this little dislocation sub-genre, to note how it features the customarily subtle balance of cuteness and sadness while staying just a hair's breadth away from sentimentality. The gags are deadpan, there's a lot of walking through strange lands with luggage noisily rolling behind, plenty of your standard miscommunication via linguistic limitations, and blank stares abound. All of these could be called tropes—yet any genre, however tenuously defined, has its tropes. The question is whether the tropes are displayed or discovered anew. Kolirin, with a very adult attitude toward resolution and the staying power of life's lingering aches, manages to breathe life into these throughout. While some moments feel more vital than others, his film overall is genuinely unforced, genuinely sweet and man, is it funny. And very much worth a visit. ♥

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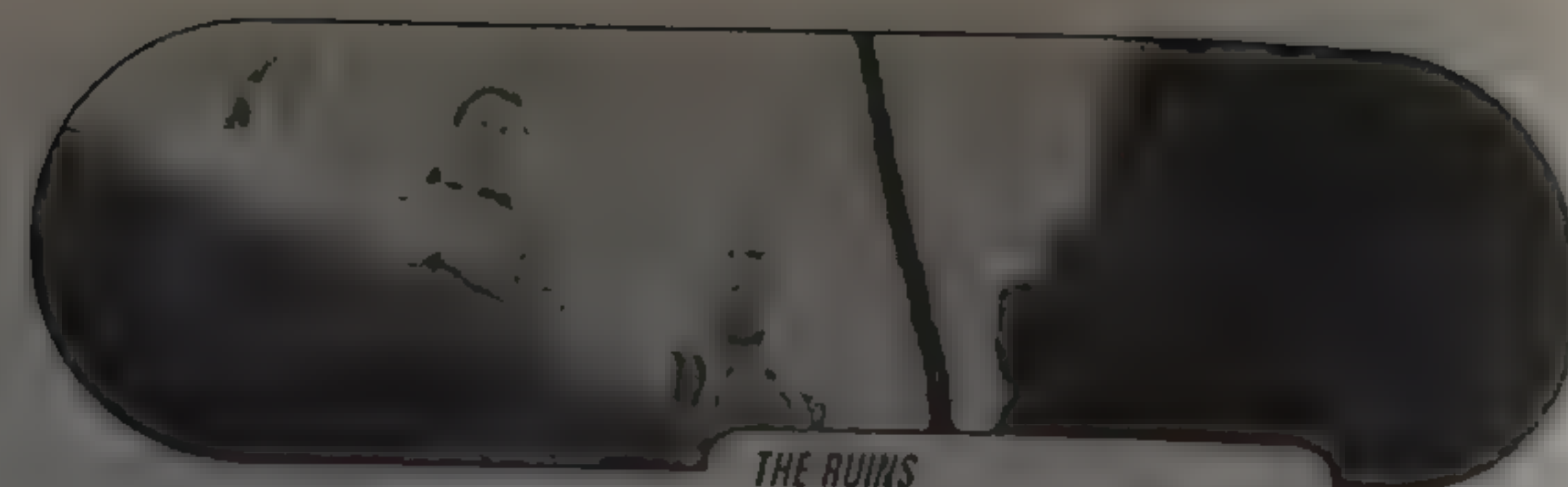
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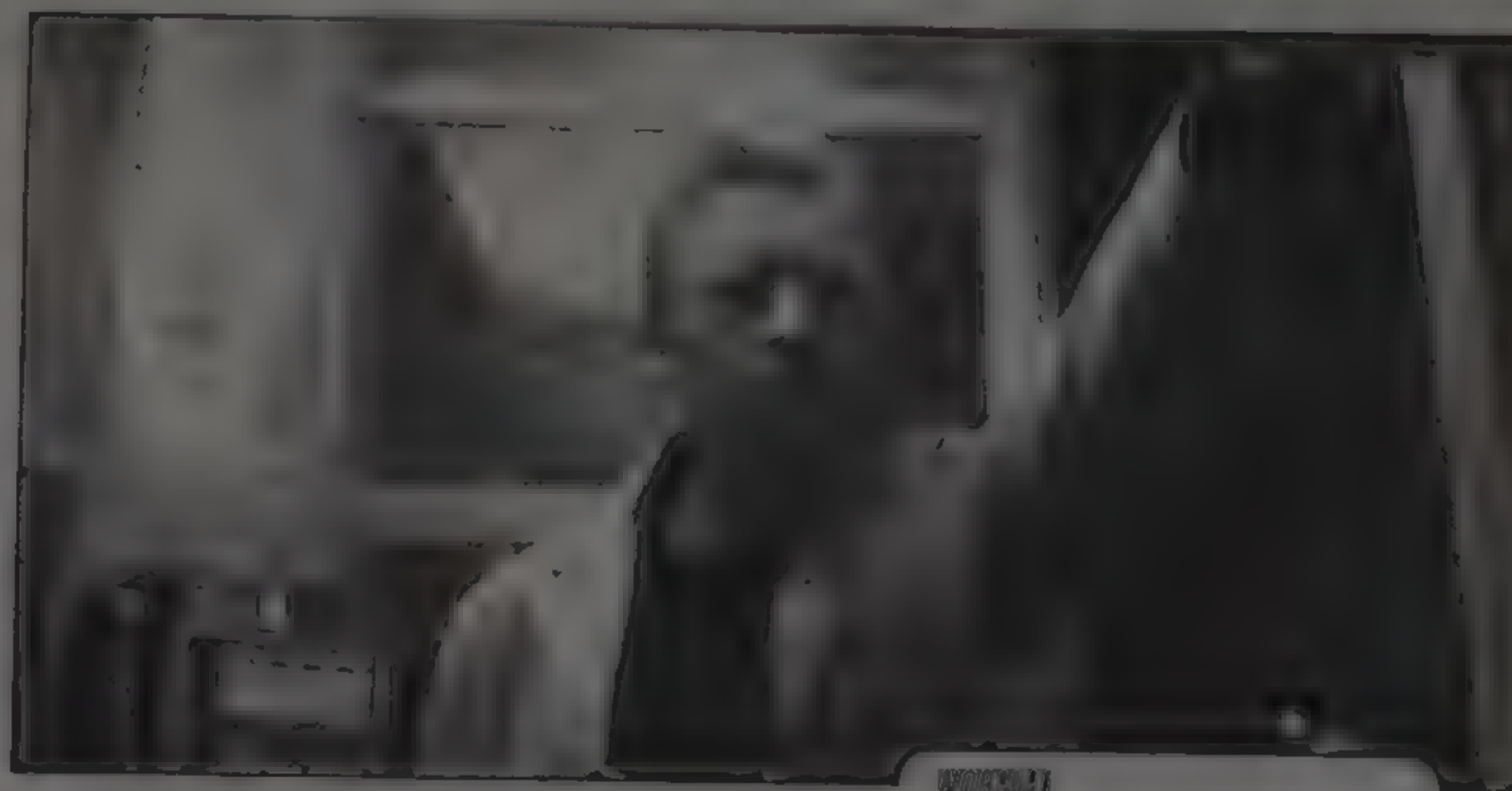
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★★★

BRIAN GIBSON / brian@vueweekly.com

There are differences in degree between a forgettably good film and a good film that sticks in your memory like a sliver. The little things—lapses in tone, a scene that doesn't feel right, slips in pacing, a strong-arming score, some ponderous dialogue—add up.

At first, the only degrees in Carl Bessai's *Normal* are temperature-related. Aerial shots offer a removed view of upper-middle class neighbourhoods, and then we're plunged into the chill: a mother, Catherine (Carrie-Anne Moss), still bathing in grief over her teenaged son's death; the son's friend and the driver on that tragic night, Jordie (Kevin Zegers), who's just been released from prison but not his anger; Walt (Callum Keith Rennie), a teacher frozen with guilt over drunk-driving the other car that night and killing Catherine's son.

Bessai draws us into and draws out these people's pain and seething suffering. Some scenes—a student's reason for not handing in an essay, a pizza job interview, the jagged, jarring shots of Walt's mildly autistic brother—seem the stuff of

feel life entirely natural and unforced. And the ending, or at least one of the two dramatic climaxes just before the end, is just right—the irresolution of grief meets the impossibility of absolution.

So why doesn't *Normal* quite come into its own? While the acting is often fine, the setting and storylines don't have enough depth to be original. Hollywood films, too offer glassy scores and are usually set in beautifully appointed but basically lifeless bourgeois homes. Not just one but two smashing-things scenes reveal a film that prefers to make characters' pent-up frustrations so obvious they verge on cliché.

Without more subtle feeling and nuanced dialogue, these characters and their relationships echo more strongly of individually stronger, distantly related works that have focussed just on the grieving mother (*Blue, Birth*) or the professor sleeping with his student (*Oleanna, Disgrace*) or the son sleeping with an older woman (*The Graduate, Spanking The Monkey*) or even the autistic man (*Rain Man*). Of course, *Normal* is not these films mashed together, or just another people-linked-by-a-traumatic-event film (*Exotica, Crash*, etc) but it doesn't quite become enough of itself, finding its own way, to avoid the ghostly outlines of these films.

The women here tend to be a little too uninvolved, a little too needy, while the men too viciously aloof, too wilfully aggressive in a narrative that works best when it's about passivity. Jordie's father comes off as a particularly dull and brutal 2-D figure, while his wife is left out in the cold by the story.

In the end, for all its smooth touches and sharp emotions, this Canadian film still has something of a better-than-normal CBC TV movie about it and not enough big-screen originality.

UNDER THE SAME MOON

DIRECTED BY PATRICIA WIELER
WRITTEN BY LORAN VILLALBA
STARRING ADRIAN ALONSO, KATE DEL CASTILLO, EMERSON DE VRIES
★★★

BRIAN GIBSON / brian@vueweekly.com

Basically a heartstring-plucking ballad about a son's love for his mother, *Under The Same Moon* isn't nearly as bad as that sounds, almost entirely because of who these son and mother are: a Mexican immigrant in the USA

Rosario (Kate del Castillo) "crosses"

metro CINEMA APRIL 10-16

THE FUTURE IS UNWRITTEN

THE SCREENINGS ON MONDAY, APRIL 14 HAVE BEEN CANCELLED DUE TO A SCHEDULING CONFLICT

GARNEAU theatre
8712 - 109 Street - 433-0728

UP THE YANGTZE
NIGHTLY 7:00 PM
SAT & SUN MATINEE 1:00 PM
RATED 14A
VISIT US ON LINE @ MAGICLANTERNTHEATRES.CA

THE OTHER BOLEYN GIRL
NIGHTLY 9:00 PM
SAT & SUN MATINEE 3:00 PM
RATED 14A
VISIT US ON LINE @ MAGICLANTERNTHEATRES.CA

NORMAL
DIRECTED BY CARL BESSAI
FRIDAY, SUNDAY & TUESDAY 9:30 - SATURDAY & WEDNESDAY 7:00

THURSDAY APR 10, 3:00 PM
SURE SHOT DOWNSIDE
FRIDAY APR 11, 11:30 PM
EDMONTON TONIGHT

All Metro screenings are held at Zeldler Hall in the Citadel Theatre, 9828-101 Ave.
For more information, call 425-5212, or log on to www.metrocinema.org

Metro operates with the support of:

Canada Council for the Arts, Conseil des arts du Canada, Foundation of the Arts, and others.

DANIMATION THE AUCHIES ARE COMING

S8 SUPER8
APRIL 26TH
8:00 & 6:55 FAVA

EMMA STERLING
APRIL 12TH
AT FAVA

FAVA
FILM & VIDEO ARTS SOCIETY AT FAVA

ago and is cleaning under the car in Los Angeles so she can send a letter to her nine-year-old Carlitos in Mexico. She walks miles to call him on a payphone every Sunday, but she misses his birthday Carlitos' guardian, who is his mother dies. He strikes out on his own for the border and beyond, desperate to find his mother. On the road, Carlitos backs up with a grumpy loner, Enrique (Marcelo Derbez).

The last half of the film is a heartwarming as Carlitos' departure from his home life is known and a penultimate, emotional scene—and certain characters, especially early on, are broadly drawn. The brother of Carlitos' father comes off as a money-grubbing rascal better left in an orphan-abandoning fairy tale. One of Enrique's employers is pretty much a caricature of a "Wile E. Coyote" type, but with the added caricature of a Spanish accent.

But the wary meeting between Carlitos and his long-absent father is exactly the kind of open-ended, quietly realistic scene the film needs, while a van search at the border builds a scorching tension as it emphasizes the terror of fleeing for a better life.

Under The Same Moon shines brightest when emphasizing the everyday toil and anxiety of being undocumented. There's a song about how "Superman is an illegal" and a radio host points out the hypocrisies of anti-immigration laws, especially in a state governed by an immigrant. There are the menial, tedious jobs illegals work (pesticide-soaked-plant-picking; dish-washing; security guarding) and Enrique's pointed reminder to Carlitos that "no one chooses to live this way" unless they had no real choice.

The harsh irony of Rosario having to leave her son to give him a better life is just one of many. Americans (one played nicely by America Ferrara) need to smuggle pre-school Mexican children across so they can pay their tuition of post-secondary privilege. An immigration and police system hunts down, jails and deports those who simply want to work essential jobs most Americans wouldn't do but benefit from every day, at the produce section of a grocery store.

And if a few scenes are a bit stiff, some of the cast a little too telenovela photogenic, Alonso's and del Castillo's intense, wrenching performance along with the grudging but soft-hearted American couple's performance seem to soften the film's tough realism and earn a hopeful ending. That ending wisely slips away from cliché in a film whose scenes of anguish and loss remind us that not many illegals are handed such a happy fate in an America where so many people's dreams are built on struggling, weary wetbacks.

NOW PLAYING

LEATHERHEADS

Directed by: JOHN DAHL

Cast: JEFFREY BRIDGES, RICK PERRY, JEFFREY BRIDGES, RICK PERRY, JEFFREY BRIDGES, RICK PERRY

What kind of comedy you can expect from a pretty *Leatherheads* as—

Jeff Bridges seems to prefer, screwball comedy. A pretty stunningly inept film

FILM LISTINGS

FRI APR 11 - THU APR 17, 2003

All showtimes are subject to change at any time. Please contact theatre to confirm.

CHASATHEATRE-JASPER

5094 Connaught Dr. Jasper, 852-4748

21 (PG, mature themes, violence)
Fri-Sat 7:00, 9:10; Sun-Thu 8:00

NIM'S ISLAND (G)
Fri-Sat 7:00, 9:10; Sun-Thu 8:00

CINEMA CITY MOVIES 12

130 Ave 50 St. 472-9779

STEP UP 2 THE STREETS (PG)
Fri, Sun-Thu 1:50, 4:45, 7:20, 9:40; Sat 1:50, 4:45, 7:20, 9:40, 11:55

THE SPIDERWICK CHRONICLES (PG, frightening scenes)
Fri, Sun-Thu 1:40, 4:25, 6:55, 9:10; Sat 1:40, 4:25, 6:55, 9:10, 11:25

THE PIRATES WHO DON'T DO ANYTHING: A VEGGIE TALES MOVIE (G)
Daily 1:25, 4:10, 6:45

DEFINITELY, MAYBE (PG, not recommended for young children)
Fri, Sun-Thu 2:00, 4:40, 7:25, 9:55; Sat 2:00, 4:40, 7:25, 9:55, 12:10

FOOL'S GOLD (PG, violence)
Fri, Sun-Thu 1:15, 4:20, 7:00, 9:35; Sat 1:15, 4:20, 7:00, 9:35, 11:55

THE BUCKET LIST (PG, coarse language)
Fri, Sun-Thu 1:55, 4:35, 7:15, 9:25; Sat 1:55, 4:35, 7:15, 9:25, 11:35

NATIONAL TREASURE: BOOK OF SECRETS (PG)
Fri, Sun-Thu 1:20, 4:05, 6:50, 9:45; Sat 1:20, 4:05, 6:50, 9:45, 12:15

UNTRACEABLE (18A, gory scenes, disturbing content)
Fri, Sun-Thu 7:30, 10:00; Sat 7:30, 10:00, 12:20

RAMBO (18A, gory scenes, brutal violence)
Fri, Sun-Thu 2:05, 4:55, 7:35, 10:05; Sat 2:05, 4:55, 7:35, 10:05, 12:05

THERE WILL BE BLOOD (PG, violence, not recommended for young children)
Daily 9:15

ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS (G)
Daily 1:35, 4:40, 7:10

CLOVERFIELD (14A, frightening scenes)
Fri, Sun-Thu 9:30; Sat 9:30, 11:40

THE WATER HORSE: LEGEND OF THE DEEP (PG)
Daily 2:00, 4:50

JUNO (14A, coarse language, mature themes)
Fri, Sun-Thu 1:45, 4:30, 7:05, 9:20; Sat 1:45, 4:30, 7:05, 9:20, 11:30

THE GOLDEN COMPASS (PG, violence, not recommended for young children)
Fri, Sun-Thu 1:30, 4:15, 7:20, 9:50; Sat 1:30, 4:15, 7:20, 9:50, 11:55

CINEPLEX ODEON NORTH

10000 Yonge St. 490-0000

SMART PEOPLE (14A, coarse language)
Fri-Mon, Wed-Thu 1:50, 4:15, 7:15, 9:40; Tue 4:15, 7:15, 9:40, Star and Strollers Screening: Tue 1:00

PROM NIGHT (14A, violence)
Daily 1:00, 3:10, 5:30, 8:00, 10:30

STREET KINGS (18A, violence)
No passes Daily 2:00, 4:30, 7:30, 10:15

LEATHERHEADS (PG)
Daily 1:40, 4:20, 7:10, 10:00

NIM'S ISLAND (G)
Daily 12:10, 2:20, 4:40, 7:00, 9:20

THE RUINS (18A, gory scenes)
Daily 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:50, 10:20

SUPERHERO MOVIE (14A)
Daily 2:30, 5:10, 8:10, 10:35

21 (PG, mature themes, violence)
Fri-Mon, Wed-Thu 12:50, 3:40, 7:05, 10:05; Tue 3:40, 7:05, 10:05; Star and Strollers Screening: Wed 1:00

THE SPIDERWICK CHRONICLES (PG)
Fri, Sun-Thu 1:40, 4:25, 6:55, 9:10; Sat 1:40, 4:25, 6:55, 9:10, 11:25

THE PIRATES WHO DON'T DO ANYTHING: A VEGGIE TALES MOVIE (G)
Fri 4:50; Sat-Sun 1:50, 4:40

P.S. I LOVE YOU (PG, coarse language, violence)
Fri, Sun-Thu 1:10, 3:50, 6:50, 9:10; Sat 4:20, 6:50, 9:10

ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS (G)
Fri 4:40, 7:30; Sat-Sun 1:20, 3:40, 7:30; Mon-Thu 7:30

SMART PEOPLE (14A, coarse language)
Fri-Mon, Wed-Thu 12:15, 3:20, 7:20, 10:00; Tue 3:20, 7:20, 10:00; Star and Strollers Screening: Tue 1:00

PROM NIGHT (14A, violence)
Daily 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 8:10, 10:45

STREET KINGS (18A, violence)
No passes Daily 1:40, 4:40, 7:45, 10:40

U, ME AUR HUM (Hindi W/E S.T.)
Daily 12:45, 4:45, 8:30

LEATHERHEADS (PG)
Daily 12:30, 1:30, 3:15, 4:15, 6:30, 7:30, 9:20, 10:20

NIM'S ISLAND (G)
Daily 1:00, 3:30, 6:30, 9:10

THE RUINS (18A, gory scenes)
Daily 12:20, 2:40, 5:20, 8:10, 10:45

SUPERHERO MOVIE (14A)
Fri, Sun-Thu 12:50, 3:40, 7:05, 10:05; Tue 3:40, 7:05, 10:05; Star and Strollers Screening: Wed 1:00

HORTON HEARS A WHO! (G)
Daily 12:30, 2:40, 5:00, 7:40, 9:50

10,000 B.C. (PG, violence)
Daily 2:10, 4:50, 7:20, 10:10

THE BANK JOB (14A, mature themes, nudity, violence)
Fri, Sun-Thu 1:50, 4:30, 7:05, 9:20; Sat 1:50, 4:30, 7:05, 9:20, 11:30

HANNAH MONTANA AND MILEY CYRUS: BEST OF BOTH WORLDS CONCERT TOUR IN DISNEY DIGITAL 3D (G)
Fri, Sun-Thu 1:50, 4:30, 7:05, 9:20; Sat 1:50, 4:30, 7:05, 9:20, 11:30

METROPOLITAN OPERA: TRISTAN UND ISOLDE - ENCORE
Classification not available; Sat 10:30

CINEPLEX ODEON SOUTH

10000 Yonge St. 490-0000

SMART PEOPLE (14A, coarse language)
Fri-Mon, Wed-Thu 12:15, 3:20, 7:20, 10:00; Tue 3:20, 7:20, 10:00; Star and Strollers Screening: Tue 1:00

PROM NIGHT (14A, violence)
Daily 12:40, 3:00, 5:30, 8:00, 10:45

STREET KINGS (18A, violence)
No passes Daily 1:40, 4:40, 7:45, 10:40

U, ME AUR HUM (Hindi W/E S.T.)
Daily 12:45, 4:45, 8:30

LEATHERHEADS (PG)
Daily 12:30, 1:30, 3:15, 4:15, 6:30, 7:30, 9:20, 10:20

NIM'S ISLAND (G)
Daily 1:00, 3:30, 6:30, 9:10

THE RUINS (18A, gory scenes)
Daily 12:20, 2:40, 5:20, 8:10, 10:45

SUPERHERO MOVIE (14A)
Fri, Sun-Thu 12:50, 3:40, 7:05, 10:05; Sat 12:50, 3:40, 7:05, 10:05

21 (PG, mature themes, violence)
Daily 1:10, 4:10, 7:10, 10:10

STOP-LOSS (14A, violence, coarse language)
Fri-Sun, Tue-Thu 3:45, 7:15, 10:00, Mon 7:15, 10:00

DRILLBIT TAYLOR (PG, coarse language, violence)
Daily 12:50

RUN FAT BOY RUN (14A)
Daily 1:20, 3:50, 6:50, 9:30

HORTON HEARS A WHO! (G)
Daily 12:00, 2:20, 4:30, 6:40, 9:00

10,000 B.C. (PG, violence)
Fri-Wed 1:15, 4:00, 7:15, 9:50; Thu 1:15, 4:00, 9:50

THE BANK JOB (14A, mature themes, nudity, violence)
Fri-Mon, Wed-Thu 1:50, 5:00, 7:40, 10:30; Tue 5:00, 7:40, 10:30; Star and Strollers Screening: Tue 1:00

U2 3D (G)
Digital Daily 12:00, 2:15, 4:20, 6:45, 9:15

METROPOLITAN OPERA: TRISTAN UND ISOLDE - ENCORE
Classification not available; Sat 10:30

CINEPLEX WEST MALL 8

10000 Yonge St. 490-0000

KRAZZY 4 (Hindi W/E S.T.) (STC)
Fri, Mon-Thu 8:45, 9:15; Sat-Sun 1:30, 4:00, 8:45, 9:15

STEP UP 2 THE STREETS (PG)
Fri, Sun-Thu 1:50, 4:45, 7:20, 9:40; Sat 1:50, 4:45, 7:20, 9:40, 11:55

THE SPIDERWICK CHRONICLES (PG)
Fri, Sun-Thu 1:40, 4:25, 6:55, 9:10; Sat 1:40, 4:25, 6:55, 9:10, 11:25

THE PIRATES WHO DON'T DO ANYTHING: A VEGGIE TALES MOVIE (G)
Fri 4:50; Sat-Sun 1:50, 4:40

P.S. I LOVE YOU (PG, coarse language, violence)
Fri, Sun-Thu 1:10, 3:50, 6:50, 9:10; Sat 4:20, 6:50, 9:10

ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS (G)
Fri 4:40, 7:30; Sat-Sun 1:20, 3:40, 7:30; Mon-Thu 7:30

SMART PEOPLE (14A, coarse language)
Fri-Mon, Wed-Thu 12:15, 3:20, 7:20, 10:00; Tue 3:20, 7:20, 10:00; Star and Strollers Screening: Tue 1:00

PROM NIGHT (14A, violence)
Daily 12:40, 3:00, 5:30, 8:00, 10:45

STREET KINGS (18A, violence)
No passes Daily 1:40, 4:40, 7:45, 10:40

U, ME AUR HUM (Hindi W/E S.T.)
Daily 12:45, 4:45, 8:30

LEATHERHEADS (PG)
Daily 12:30, 1:30, 3:15, 4:15, 6:30, 7:30, 9:20, 10:20

NIM'S ISLAND (G)
Daily 1:00, 3:30, 6:30, 9:10

THE RUINS (18A, gory scenes)
Daily 12:20, 2:40, 5:20, 8:10, 10:45

SUPERHERO MOVIE (14A)
Fri, Sun-Thu 12:50, 3:40, 7:05, 10:05; Sat 12:50, 3:40, 7:05, 10:05

21 (PG, mature themes, violence)
Daily 1:10, 4:10, 7:10, 10:10

STOP-LOSS (14A, violence, coarse language)
Fri-Sun, Tue-Thu 3:45, 7:15, 10:00, Mon 7:15, 10:00

DRILLBIT TAYLOR (PG, coarse language, violence)
Daily 12:50

RUN FAT BOY RUN (14A)
Daily 1:20, 3:50, 6:50, 9:30

HORTON HEARS A WHO! (G)
Daily 12:30, 2:40, 5:00, 7:40, 9:50

JUNO (14A, coarse language, mature themes)
Fri 4:30, 6:50, 9:10; Sat-Sun 1:40, 4:20, 6:50, 9:10; Mon-Thu 6:50, 9:10

THE GOLDEN COMPASS (PG, violence, not recommended for young children)
Fri, Mon-Thu 7:00, 9:45; Sat-Sun 2:00, 4:30, 7:00, 9:45

CITY CENTRE 9

10000 Yonge St. 490-0000

SMART PEOPLE (14A, coarse language)
Dolby Stereo Digital Daily 1:00, 3:40, 7:10, 9:30

PROM NIGHT (14A, violence)
Dolby Stereo Digital Daily 1:10, 3:50, 7:20, 9:40

LEATHERHEADS (PG)
DTS Digital Daily 12:45, 3:25, 6:35, 9:10

STREET KINGS (18A, violence)
DTS Digital Daily 1:20, 4:00, 7:00, 9:20

21 (PG, mature themes, violence)
DTS Digital Daily 12:40, 3:20, 6:40, 9:20

RUN FAT BOY RUN (14A)
Dolby Stereo Digital Daily 12:50, 3:35, 7:15, 9:45

THE RUINS (18A, gory scenes)
DTS Digital Fri-Wed 1:40, 4:20, 7:30, 10:00; Thu 1:40, 4:20, 10:00

HORTON HEARS A WHO! (G)
DTS Digital Fri-Sun, Tue-Wed 12:30, 2:35, 4:40; Mon, Thu 12:30, 2:35

BELLA (PG, mature themes)
DTS Digital, Spanish subtitles Daily 1:30, 4:10, 6:30, 9:00

IN BRUGES (18A, violence, coarse language)
DTS Digital Fri-Sun, Tue-Wed 6:50, 9:15; Mon 9:15

CLAREVIEW 10

4211-139 Ave. 472-7600

NIM'S ISLAND (G)
Fri-Sun 1:20, 4:20, 7:10, 9:35; Mon-Thu 4:20, 7:10, 9:35

THE RUINS (18A, gory scenes)
Fri-Sun 1:50, 4:50, 7:20, 9:40; Mon-Thu 4:50, 7:20, 9:40

LEATHERHEADS (PG)
Fri-Sun 12:50, 4:05, 6:45, 9:15; Mon-Thu 4:05, 6:45, 9:15

BELLA (PG, mature themes)
Fri Sun 1:40, 4:30, 7:00, 9:25; Mon-Thu 4:30, 7:00, 9:25

PROM NIGHT (14A, violence)
Fri-Sun 2:00, 4:40, 7:30, 9:50; Mon-Thu 4:40, 7:30, 9:50

STREET KINGS (18A, violence)
Fri-Sun 1:10, 4:10, 5:50, 9:30; Mon-Thu 4:10, 6:50, 9:30

U2 3D (G)
Fri-Sun 12:40, 2:50, 5:00, 7:15, 9:45; Mon-Thu 5:00, 7:15, 9:45

SUPERHERO MOVIE (14A)
Fri-Sun 2:10, 4:45, 7:40, 9:55; Mon-Thu 4:45, 7:40, 9:55

21 (PG, mature themes, violence)
Fri-Sun 1:00, 4:00, 6:40, 9:20; Mon-Thu 4:00, 6:40, 9:20

10,000 B.C. (PG, violence)
Daily 9:00

HORTON HEARS A WHO! (G)
Fri-Sun 1:30, 4:15, 6:30; Mon-Thu 4:15, 6:30

GALAXY-SHERWOOD PARK

2020 Sherwood Drive, 519-9150

PROM NIGHT (14A, violence)
Daily 12:40, 3:00, 5:30, 8:00, 10:45

STREET KINGS (18A, violence)
Daily 1:00, 4:10, 7:00, 9:45; Mon-Thu 4:10, 7:00, 9:45

LEATHERHEADS (PG)
Daily 12:40, 3:00, 5:30, 8:00, 10:45

NIM'S ISLAND (G)
Daily 1:50, 4:40, 7:10, 9:40, 12:40

THE RUINS (18A, gory scenes)
Fri 4:15, 7:40, 10:20; Sat-Sun 12:50, 4:15, 7:40, 10:20, Mon-Thu 7:40, 10:20

SUPERHERO MOVIE (14A)
Fri 4:40, 6:50, 9:30; Sat-Sun 1:20, 4:40, 6:50, 9:30; Mon-Thu 6:50, 9:30

21 (PG, mature themes, violence)
Fri 4:30, 7:15, 10:10; Sat-Sun 12:10, 3:30, 7:15, 10:10; Mon-Thu 7:15, 10:10

DRILLBIT TAYLOR (PG, coarse language, violence)
Fri 4:00, 6:30, 9:20; Sat-Sun 1:30, 4:00, 6:30, 9:20

HORTON HEARS A WHO! (G)
Fri 4:30, 7:05, 9:40; Sat-Sun 1:10, 4:30, 7:05, 9:40

10,000 B.C. (PG, violence)
Fri

Megatunes

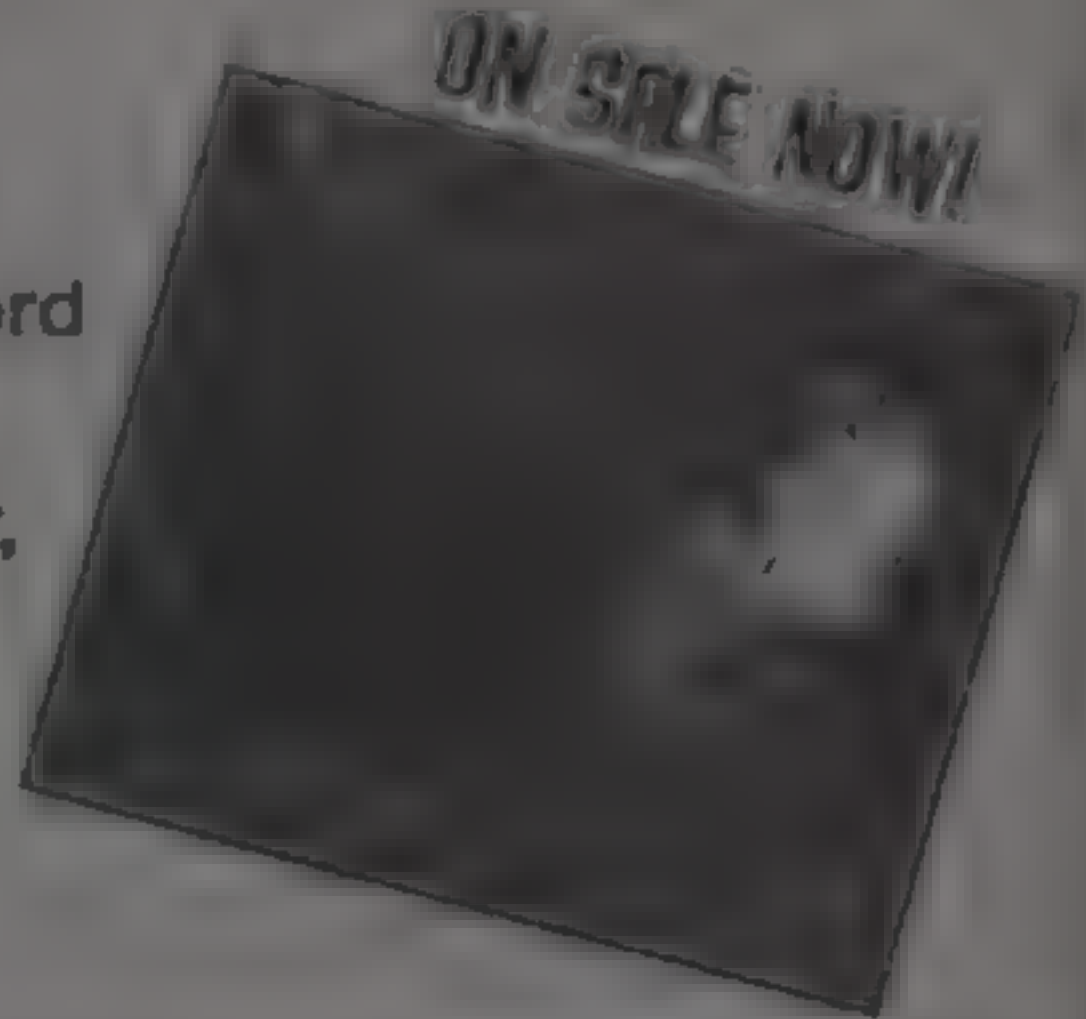
Your Music Destination

FOR THE WEEK ENDING APRIL 10, 2008

1. Black Mountain - In The Future (scratch records)
2. Van Morrison - Keep It Simple (exile)
3. Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds - Dig!!! Lazarus Dig!!! (anti)
4. The Black Keys - Attack & Release (nonesuch)
5. KD Lang - Watershed (nonesuch)
6. The Raconteurs - Consolers Of The Lonely (warner)
7. Nine Inch Nails - Ghosts I-IV (nir)
8. Levon Helm - On The Border (vanguard)
9. Daniel Lanois - Here Is Where I Am (red floor)
10. Vampire Weekend - S/T (xl)
11. Gnarls Barkley - The Odd Couple (duanetown)
12. Radiohead - In Rainbows (nonesuch)
13. She & Him - Volume One (orange)
14. Sun Kil Moon - April (caldo verde)
15. Robert Plant & Alison Krauss - Raising Sand (rounder)
16. The Dodos - Visiter (french kiss)
17. Ladyhawk - Shots (jagjaguwar)
18. Cadence Weapon - After Party Babies (upper class)
19. Drive By Truckers - Brighter Than Creation's Dark (new west)
20. Kathleen Edwards - Asking For Flowers (maple)
21. Dead Child - Attack (quarter stick)
22. Corb Lund - Horse Soldier! Horse Soldier! (story plain)
23. Nada Surf - Lucky (barsuk)
24. Ann Vriend - When We Were Spies (fire escape)
25. Man Man - Rabbit Holes (anti)
26. Samantha Schultz - Both Sides (samantha schultz)
27. Iron & Wine - The Shepherd's Dog (zoh app)
28. Gary Louris - Vagabonds (ryko)
29. O.S.T. - I'm Not There (columbia)
30. Exit Strategy - United States Of Amnesia (es systems)

JANE VAIN & THE DARK MATTER

Calgary's Jane Vain & The Dark Matter have been turning heads all over the place with the coolest record since Timbuk 3's, Greetings from Timbuk 3. Released earlier this year, **Love Is Where The Smoke Is** is just the beginning for this big city 6 piece. Did I mention I used to live in Calgary?



FILM CAPSULES

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Not necessarily egregiously bad, mind you: Clooney and co-star John Krasinski—and, to a lesser degree, Renée Zellweger—are far too cinematically charismatic to make this a true dud. But holy man does this film not ever manage to do anything at all it sets out to.

A decently significant portion of the blame for that sits in Clooney's director chair: though he did an admirable job in the far more staid drama *Good Night, and Good Luck*, he seems fairly incapable of sustaining any sort of energy, comedic or otherwise, in his films. As with his mangling of the Charlie Kaufman-penned *Confessions of a Dangerous Mind*, Clooney just can't seem to get the camera to suggest any kind of life, which is troublesome enough when you're trying to get some kind of romantic or comedic spark, but is downright unbearable when you're sitting through football scenes that hold all the drama and excitement of peewee tykes forgetting if they're supposed to be a guard or a tackle.

That said, Clooney had a lot more life to suck out with Kaufman's script, *Leatherheads* is a significantly more tin-eared film, to the point where not even Clooney himself, probably the most charismatic actor of his generation can save some of the lines: "You're the kind of cocktail that comes on like sugar but gives you a kick in the head" doesn't even work as a bad parody of Prohibition-era patter. (To that end, it isn't surprising to see Rick Reilly, the former SI columnist who's guiding philosophy as a writer is novelty, no matter how reactionary or meaningless, listed as one of the film's writers.)

Even beyond that, though, there's just too much indelicately crammed into the story for any of it to actually find its footing and get compelling: there's the underdog sports league angle, the romantic triangle, the corruption of sport (it's absolutely amazing how quickly pro football goes from backwater also-ran to stadium-filling den of sleaze), trying to make it as a woman in a man's world, exposing a fake war hero's lies: it's enough that the supposedly climactic moment, the big game, barely seems relevant to the people involved, never mind the audience watching.

There are a few cute, spry moments, but they're easily overshadowed by the vast stretches of tedium. Overall, you'd be better off renting *Bringing Up Baby* and interspersing it with football highlights

NIM'S ISLAND

WRITTEN BY MARK LEVIN, JENNIFER FLACKETT
WRITTEN BY JOSEPH KWONG, PAULA MAZUR, JEFFREY HICKS
STARRING ABIGAIL BRESLIN, JODIE FOSTER, GERARD BUTLER
★★★

OMAR MOULLEM / omar@vuweekly.com
I remember that day of when I rushed out to see *Nim's Island* last weekend, but if you have kids and need to occupy them, stimulate their imaginations and encourage their appreciation of nature and adventure, I urge you to take them to this movie. Based upon a book by the same title, it indulges in the fantasies of a courageous young girl and a cowardice book writer.

Nim (Abigail Breslin) lives alone with her scientist dad Jack (Gerard Butler) on an undisclosed island, home to an active volcano. Despite her antisocial upbringing, Nim loves the seclusion, and besides, she's befriended a seagull, a sea lion, and a



lizard, which are way better than a friend or a mother could ever be. When she's not dancing with the animals, she keeps her head buried in Alex Rover books.

Nim imagines Alex Rover as an Indiana Jones-type adventurer, always wiggling himself out of trouble, and resembling her dad exactly. Gerard Butler also plays Rover in fantasy sequences (spare yourself the psychoanalytic, Electra complex ramblings—she's just a little girl). What Nim doesn't know is Alex Rover is the pen name of Alexandra Rover (Jodie Foster), an agoraphobic, germaphobic, anthrophobic woman. Foster is completely over-the-top with her nuttiness, but kids will surely enjoy her dumb foibles.

While researching her next adventure, Rover contacts Jack to infer about volcanoes. Since Jack is out fishing for plankton, Nim acts as his assistant, conducting the research herself. But after she injures herself badly, Jack doesn't return when promised, and a cruise ship discovers the island and plans to turn it into a resort, she reaches out to Alex Rover—the adventurer, not the writer—for help. Thus, it becomes another instalment in the *Home Alone* franchise, but it's on an island.

But hey, what's wrong with *Home Alone*? I'm sure you can recall the first time you witnessed young Macaulay Culkin foil those nasty robbers' plans. That's what children who see this movie will experience. That plus some worldly escapades

Husband and wife directors Mark Levin and Jennifer Flackett amused both adults and children with the little-known gem *Little Manhattan*, a family-oriented, Woody Allen-esque romantic comedy. Here, the entertainment is almost strictly for the kids (although Rover's Purell obsessions may strike a chord with some neurotics). You will probably roll your eyes a lot, especially after watching each character escape death by the most unbelievable means, but your children's eyes will be unblinking and too dry to shift anywhere

THE RUINS

WRITTEN BY SCOTT B. SMITH
WRITTEN BY SCOTT B. SMITH
STARRING JONATHAN TUCKER, JENA MALONE
★★★

JONATHAN BUSCH / jonathan@vuweekly.com
A couple servings of tantalizing college stu-

dent flesh goes to waste in the adaptation of Scott B. Smith's novel *The Ruins*, and it's easy to blame the pile of haunted rose bushes coating the walls of a Mayan ruin in Mexico. The thrilling element of this horror story is how its victims fall prey to themselves more quickly than to the "monsters," a storytelling MacGuffin seen in the better half of most zombie features where paranoia and jealousy strike a subtle emotional chord to impact the display of violence.

Four tequila-drenched Americans are drawn away from their cozy resort on their last day in Mexico to visit a hidden archaeological dig site. They are convinced to join a tourist from Germany and his friend, despite all the telling signs on the way that suggest that something really horrible lies ahead. A cab driver tells them to book it home while they still can, the path is blocked off halfway to their destination, and when they finally reach it, a posse of villagers chase them up the ruins threatening bloody murder.

So they're stuck at the top of this thing with less than enough water and food, and soon realize why they shouldn't have come. Studly med student Jeff (Jonathan Tucker) tries to keep his compadres calm amongst the catastrophe, which gets worse once they try to retrieve a ringing cell phone at the pit of a mine shaft. But once the German breaks some limbs and Stacey (Laura Ramsey) gets a nasty cut on her thigh, a bunch of leafy green vines grow inside their wounds. Soon enough Amy (Jena Malone) helps the gang realize that their own private revisiting of *Little Shop of Horrors* is why they were told not come here.

But as a nameless user on the film's juvenile forum at imdb.com shared, the plants are never guilty of eating anybody. They're most definitely manipulative and disgusting, not a far cry from the Stephen King chapter of *Creepshow*, but nonetheless the film's insane gore is a result of the difficulty of survival amongst hysterical Westerners. Author Smith wrote the screenplay for his own book, so the film feels like a sincere imagining of his work. It's a shame that the film's acting strengths. And it wouldn't be my assessment if I didn't commend the casting of underdog hotties Malone (*Donnie Darko*) and Shawn Ashmore (*X-Men*), who prove in a couple short scenes that little boobs and skinny muscles are enticing and memorable. ♥

CARIBOU / 60

JOHN BUTLER / 70

WOODHANDS / 76



Say a *Highway Prayer* for Twilight Hotel

EDEN MUNRO / eden@vuwweekly.com

It's a special thing when two musicians click and begin creating a whole that is far greater than the separate pieces. For Dave Quanbury and Brandy Zdan, the duo that is **Twilight Hotel**, the moment was immediate and the chemistry undeniable—both musically and romantically—when they met in the summer of 2002 at Ontario's Trout Forest Music Festival.

"It's always kind of a universal thing that a musician likes to connect with another musician, and when it works you can kinda tell, and when it doesn't work you can definitely tell," Quanbury recalls over the phone from the couple's Winnipeg home. "With me and Brandy, I was able to take everything that I do and just add it to what she did and we were kind of like musical soul mates. We knew right away.

"We met and we played around a campfire and in the middle of that very first song we were playing we knew this is exactly what was going to happen, that we were going to team up and that was going to be the beginning of the entire story," he adds. "It didn't take any time to figure out. I'd say if it was a three-minute song we probably knew by minute one."

Quanbury speaks with a deliberate, passionate enthusiasm that is contagious. He is certain that he and Zdan are meant to be making music together and it's impossible to disagree with him, especially after listening to the duo's second album, *Highway Prayer*. The disc is wrapped up in a sound that is as scratched and dusty as an old record found hidden away in an attic. But while the sonic qualities give the album its character, the lifeblood pumps directly through the songs that the two of them have written.

PREVIEW

SAT, APR 12 (8 PM)
TWILIGHT HOTEL
WITH HERALD NIX, NATHAN CARROLL
VELVET UNDERGROUND, STD

number of possible approaches to the writing of *Twilight Hotel*'s material—sometimes one of them has just the lyrics and needs some chords, while other tunes are written entirely with the two of them sitting together and tossing ideas back and forth—but it wasn't always like that.

"It took us a while to stop being two separate performers where I was adding to something she was doing and she was adding to something I was doing," he explains. "We'd actually have a show where I would play a set and she would play a set, but she'd back up my set and I'd back up her set, and then once upon a time, one day we just decided, 'Hey, let's mix our songs together in the same set,' and once we did that I think that's where the entity of *Twilight Hotel* was born.

"On her own she's a fabulous singer-songwriter and on my own I'm also a singer-songwriter," he continues. "And so for a while that's all we were doing, we were just two different singer-songwriters playing together but then somewhere, the collaboration, it became its own entity: *Twilight Hotel*."

When *Twilight Hotel* heads back out on the road after a brief break at home, it will be with just Quanbury and Zdan on the stage. Quanbury says that the two of them do occasionally add a rhythm section when playing around Winnipeg—specifically, he says that they use the drummer and the bassist from the Scott Nolan Band—but he's quite proud of the fact that he's been told that he and Zdan make a lot of noise for a duo, playing as though they have a band bashing

away behind them.

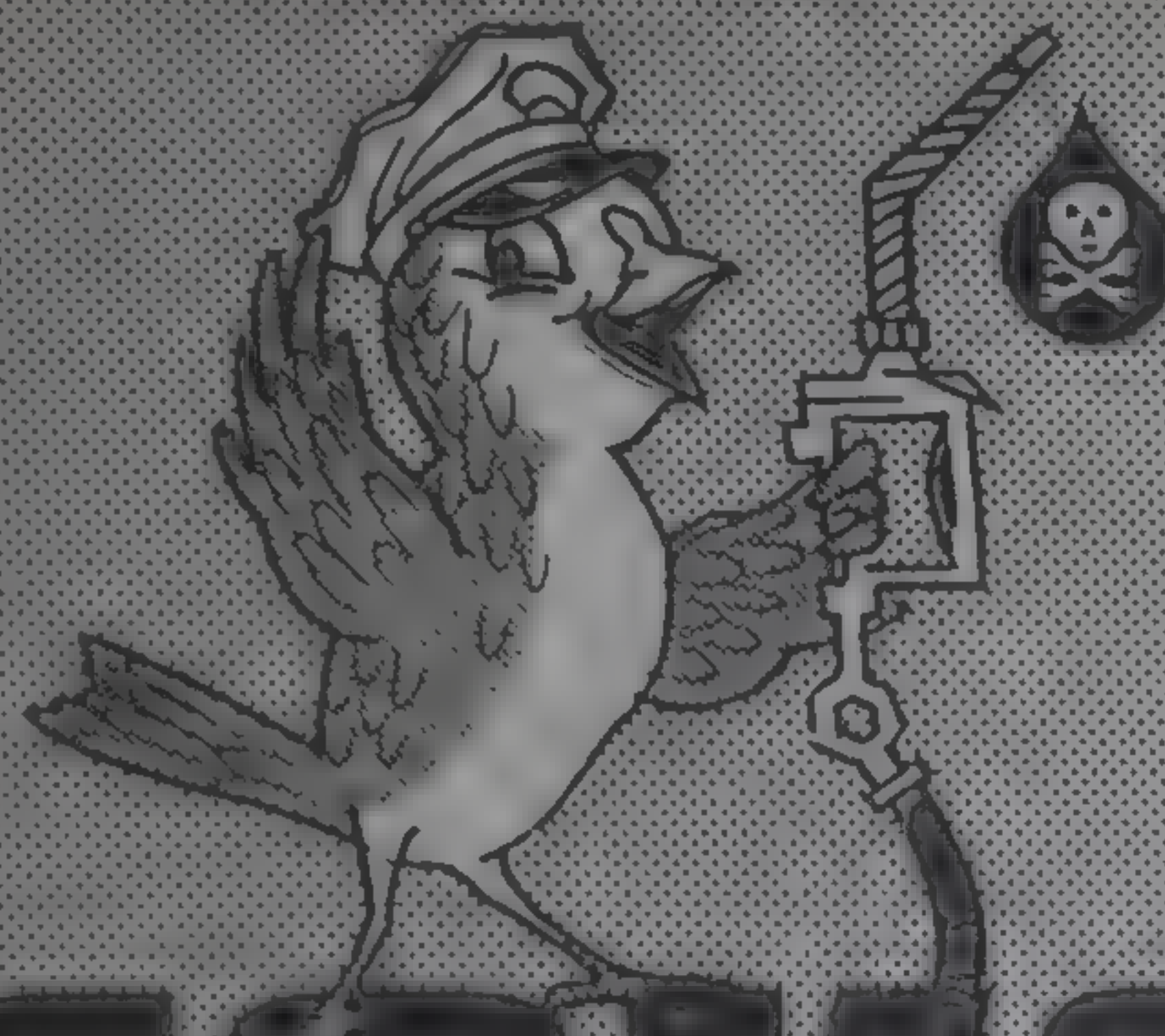
"I have people come up to me and say, 'Oh, I could just hear drums and I could just hear bass,' and the more I think about that, that's kind of a cool aspect of the show, kind of a theatre of the mind," he relates. "People are imagining what could be there."

THE STUDIO IS something different for *Twilight Hotel*, though. On *Highway Prayer*, producer Colin Linden recorded the duo with a band that included Dave Roe of Johnny Cash's band on bass and the late Richard Bell, piano player for both Janis Joplin and, in later years, the Band. Quanbury happily gives the credit for the album's sound to Linden.

"It was really Colin Linden's call—he said, 'You know, I've thought about your songs a lot, I want to do these ones and I've got these guys that I want to play on them,' and the quality of these players, we were just not going to say no to that," he remembers. "These guys would hear the song for the first time and that's what was recorded, because they're just so intuitive. We didn't have rehearsals with them; we didn't sit down and discuss parts. We just played as we normally did and they just played along."

"One day we do intend to make a record as a duo," he adds, suggesting that, for *Twilight Hotel*, the recording process is an evolving one that is continually in flux. "Every batch of songs is going to dictate what the arrangement should be. We have a new batch of songs and they haven't really taken shape in our heads so it's hard to know whether this particular new batch of songs will be the one to do that. But there's also the option of trying to capture the live show and putting out a record that is from a gig, so maybe that's the one that ends up being a duo record." ▼

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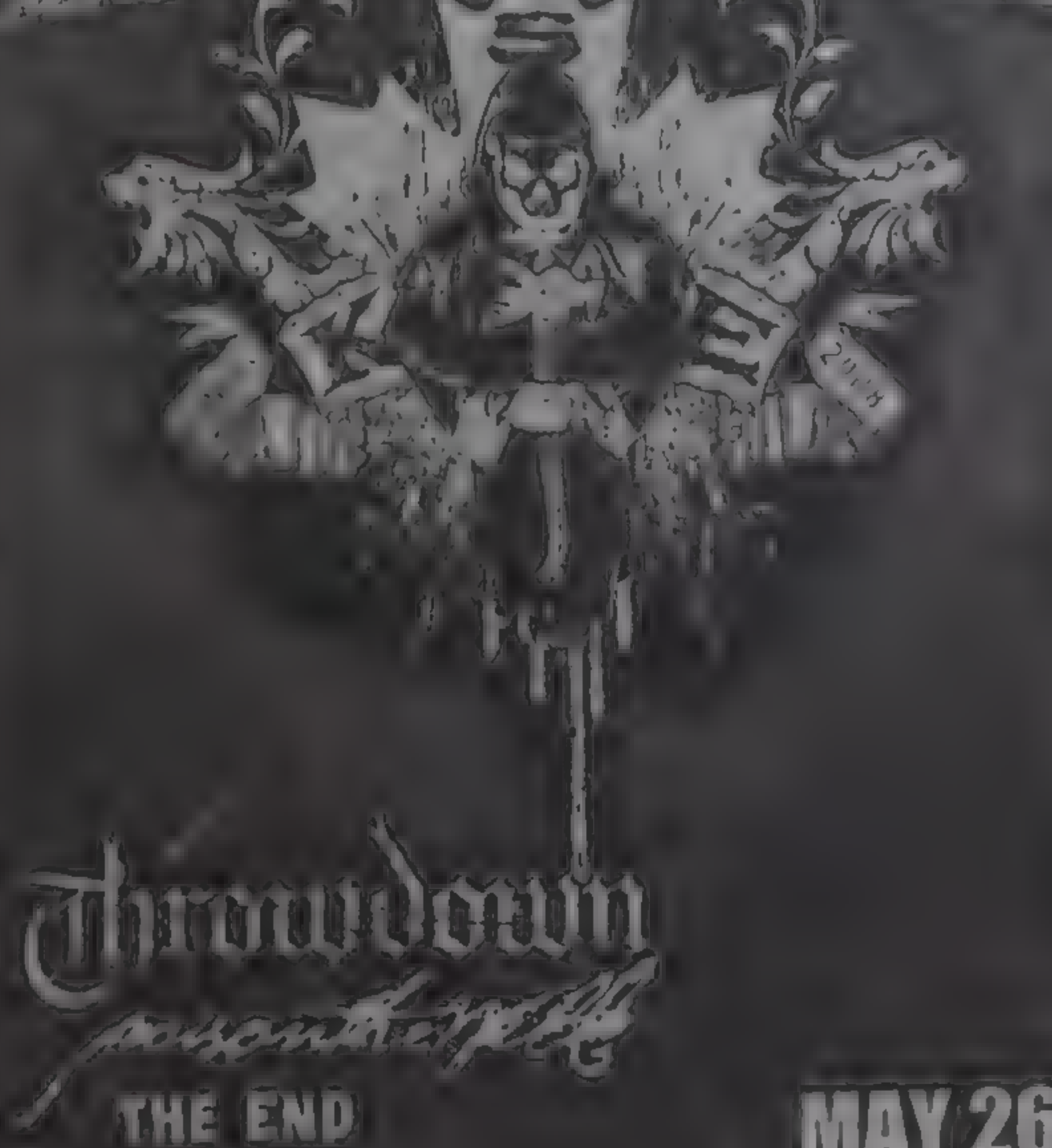
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QUANBURY SAYS THAT there are guys

Caribou is math-rock in a sideways sorta way

ALYSSA NOEL / alysa@vuwweekly.com

Dan Snaith's music never called for vocals. His songs never felt lacking; they never lost your attention. But fast forward to "Hello Hammerheads," the stand-out track on 2005's *Milk of Human Kindness*, revel in its ethereal beauty and you immediately understand why he chose to give his latest album, *Andorra*, a voice.

"It's been a gradual thing," says Snaith, better known by his moniker, Caribou, over the phone from North Hampton. "The other albums [have] a bit of vocals, so it meant I was singing on stage every night—but not to the extent of this album. Recording the album showed me what my voice can and can't do. Now that I sing every night it's not a big deal, but if you had asked me five years ago to go on stage and sing I would've been terrified."

PREVIEW
TUE, APRIL 15 (8 PM)
CAMPUS
MUSIC BUTTERBROS
STARLITE ROOM STD

Snaith has certainly had ample opportunity to shed his stage fright. He and his band have been on tour virtually non-stop around the world since releasing the record in August 2007. It was only five months ago that they graced the stage at the Starlite Room here in Edmonton, but already they're back again—at the same venue, even.

"The songs change as we're touring," he assures. "We thought it would be fun to do North America again. Primarily, we're doing it because we enjoy it."

According to some industry spectators, Caribou's popularity has spiked



with this record. Snaith's anecdotes of packing shows in such far flung places as Croatia—and his return to this city—seem to confirm that.

"[We're] getting to [attract fans] all

over," he says. "Over the years [the fan base has] built up to be pretty good everywhere ... We did some shows off the touring map and the crowds were great everywhere."

SNATH'S MOVE TO England six years ago to complete his PhD in math at the University of Sheffield inadvertently helped him cover more ground with his music. He has a solid base established on this side of the Atlantic and he's been able to country-hop easily in Europe, garnering attention there. Surprisingly, that's not the only instance where his life as a mathematician and a musician intersect.

"The thing that is common to both of them is they're both this abstract

struggle to create something. Math is much more creative at the research level than it is in high school. Putting together something that's hard to see the end result while you're working on it and then that 'eureka' moment when it comes together," he explains, though he admits that's about the only commonality between them. "There's definitely no mathematics in my music."

(Though, every interviewer loves to ask anyways. "It's fair enough," Snaith says, probably shrugging. "It's something that stands out about me.")

What you will find in his electronic pop are lush melodies flush with emotion and flecked with rock tendencies, particularly on his most recent album. He explains the shift from electronic loop-based music to a (sort of) more traditional set up occurred organically.

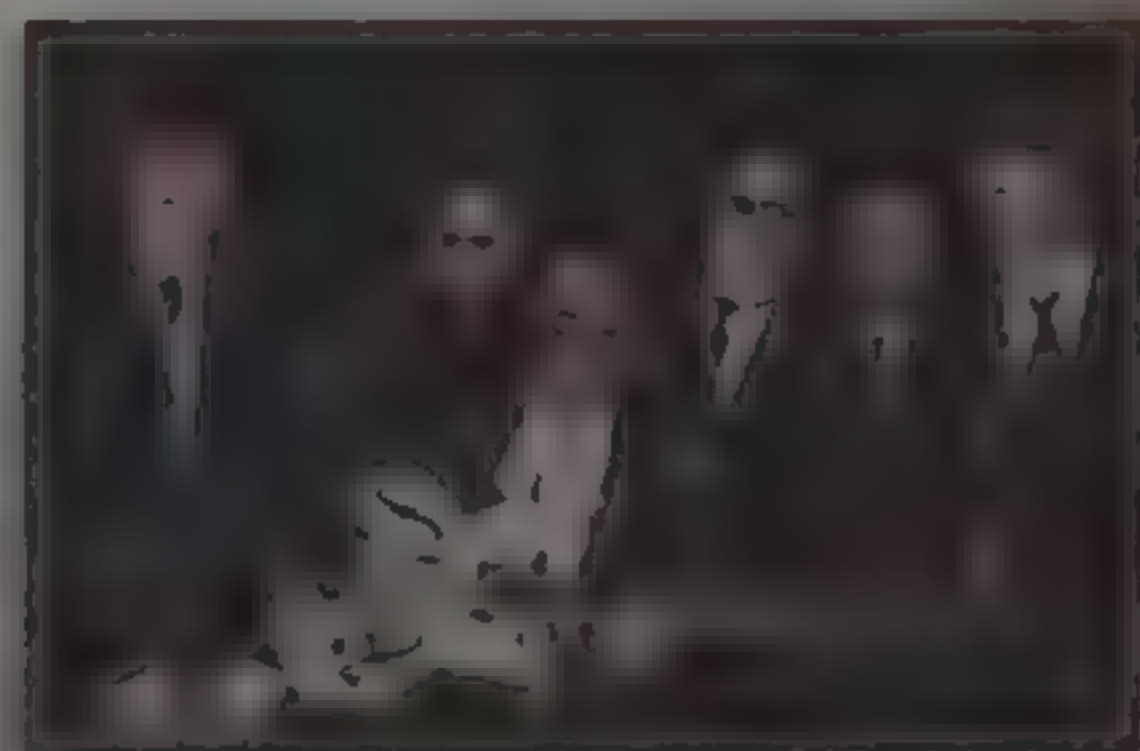
"I don't plan any of the changes of wanting to make it more popular," he says. "The only kind of factor that determines what makes it on the album is, 'What makes me excited?' This time around it was the composition and focussing on melodies and harmonies and densities of musical ideas ... I guess the important thing for me isn't starting from point A to get to point B. Each time I try to do something that I find exciting."

And the Canadian indie scene is one set of pipes richer for it. ♡

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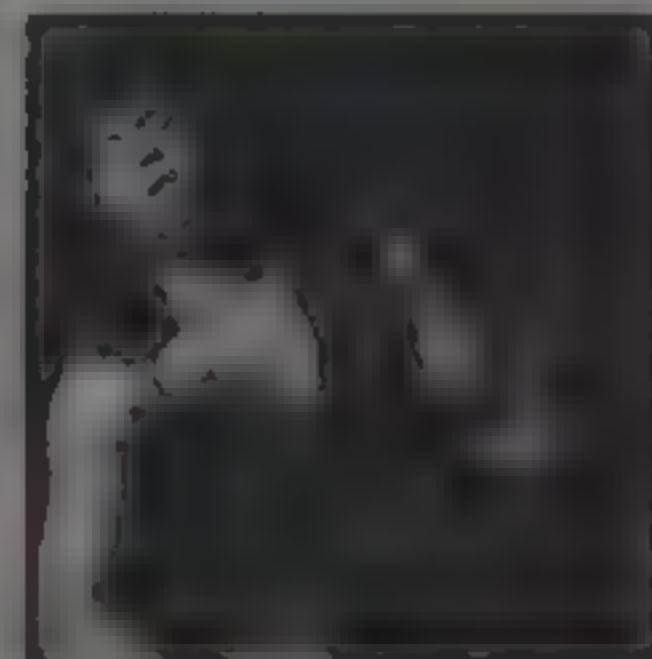
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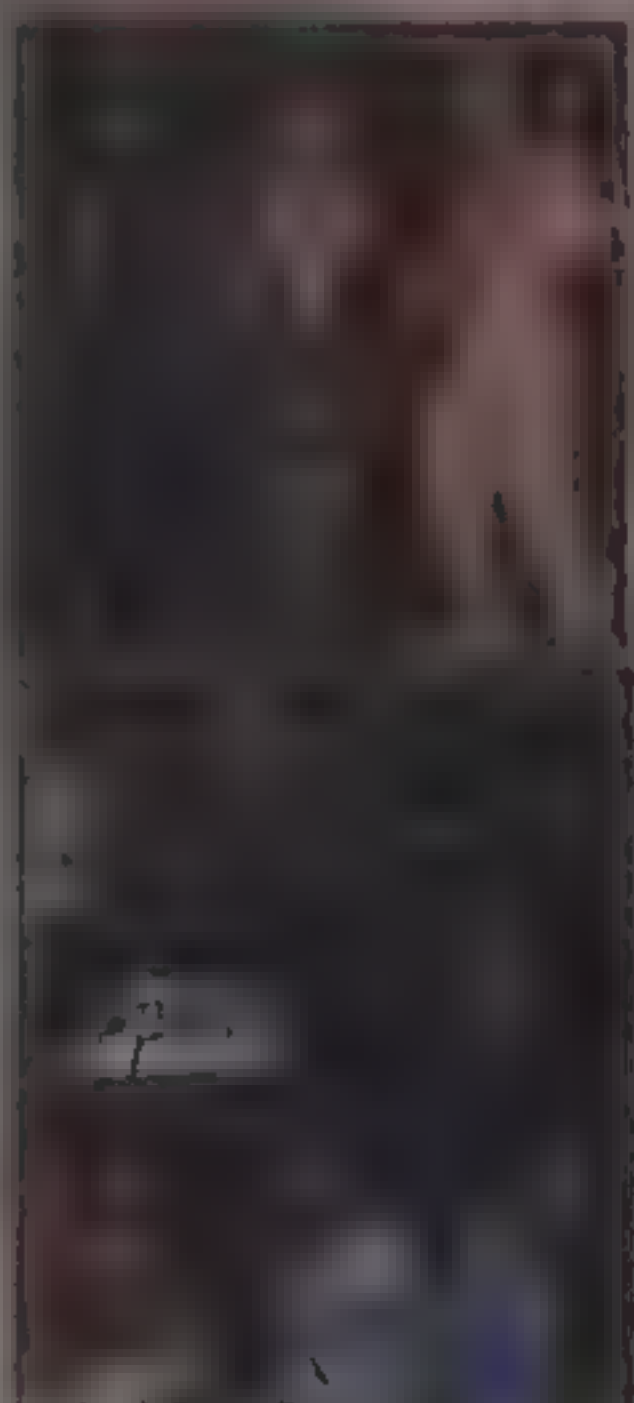


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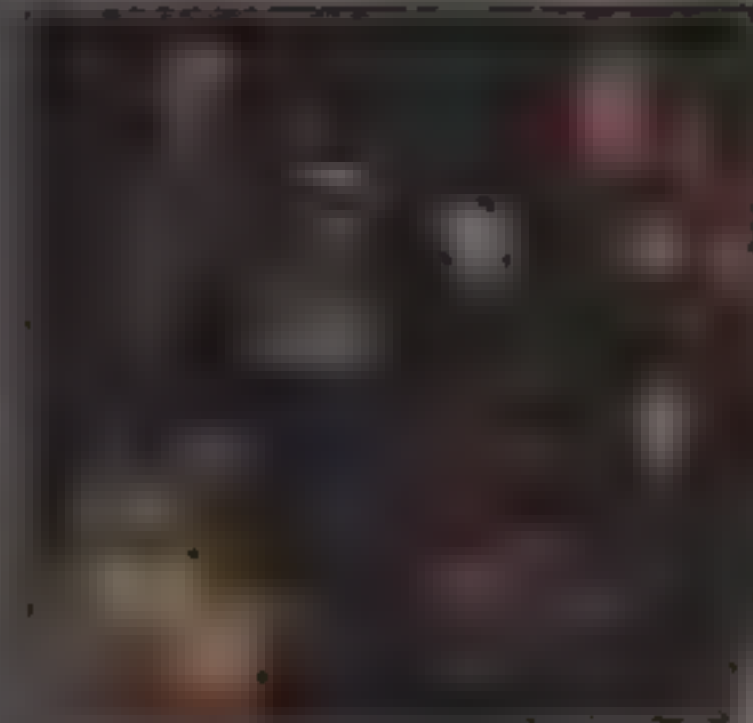
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 Eaton Singers are preparing to perform at the Viper Centre in the city. They'll be performing the

latest collaborative effort from John Murrell and John Estacio, *The Houses Stand Not Far Apart*, alongside Karl Jenkin's *The Armed Man—A Mass For Peace*. The event is being called Music in Times of Conflict. Estacio, the composer, and Murrell, the writer, have previously collaborated on two Operas: *Filumena* and *Frobisher*. This time out, their goal was to write something that would resonate with humanity in the 21st century. *The Houses*

Stand Not Far Apart will be Estacio's first Edmonton premiere in several years. Estacio acknowledges the heavy catalogue of music pleading for peace, understanding and hope that comes before his work. This includes some major Classical works, but also tons of folk and indie rock gems. "It's just a different canvas," he sighs. "There's so much wonderful folk and pop music that deals with world order, and cry-

ing for peace. Those songs are certainly potent and have done wonderful things. My canvas is slightly larger—it involves considerably larger forces coming together to bring it to life. But, other than that, I don't find that much different. It's still music and words; we're just using different colours." When speaking about the specifics of *The Houses Stand Not Far Apart*, Estacio's voice fills with latent enthusiasm, seemingly painting the words in the air and admir-

ing their affect. "It's really a metaphor," he begins simply. "There are two houses divided by a small river. It's a metaphor for two worlds, for two countries, for two different tribes, separated geographically while remaining so close. They have a lot of strong similarities, and they don't realize how similar they are. In fact, it's only small differences passed on from generation to

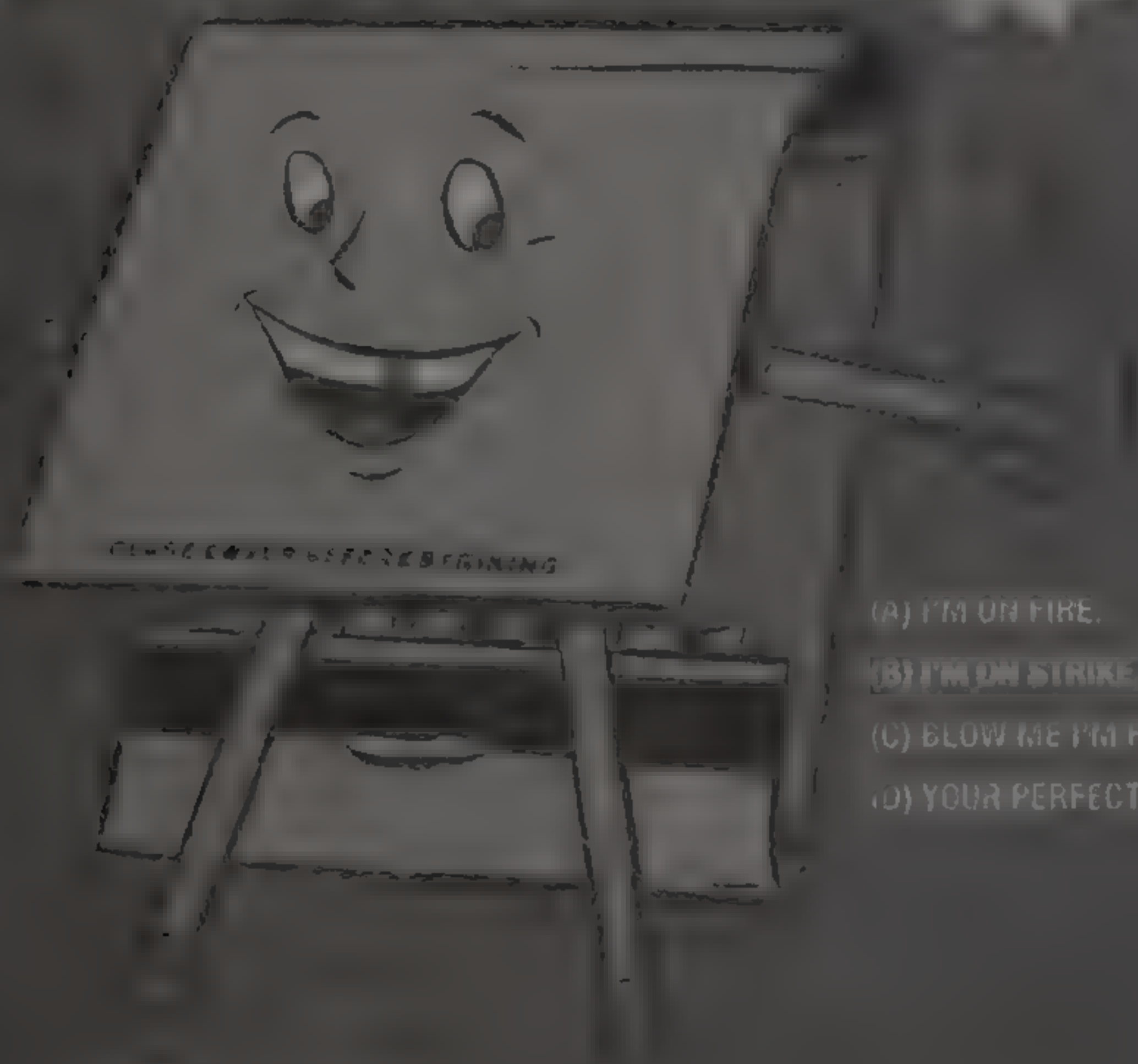
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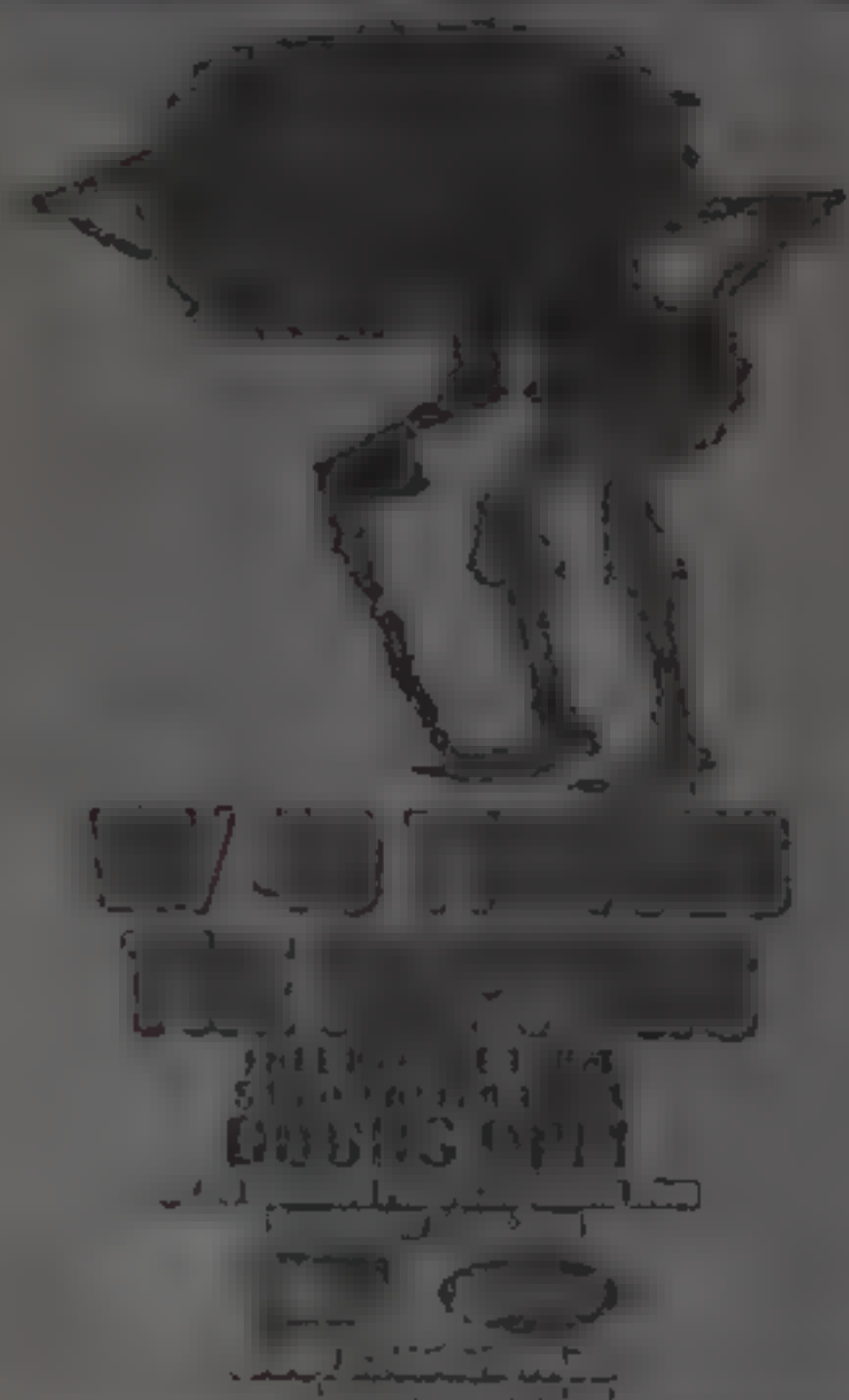
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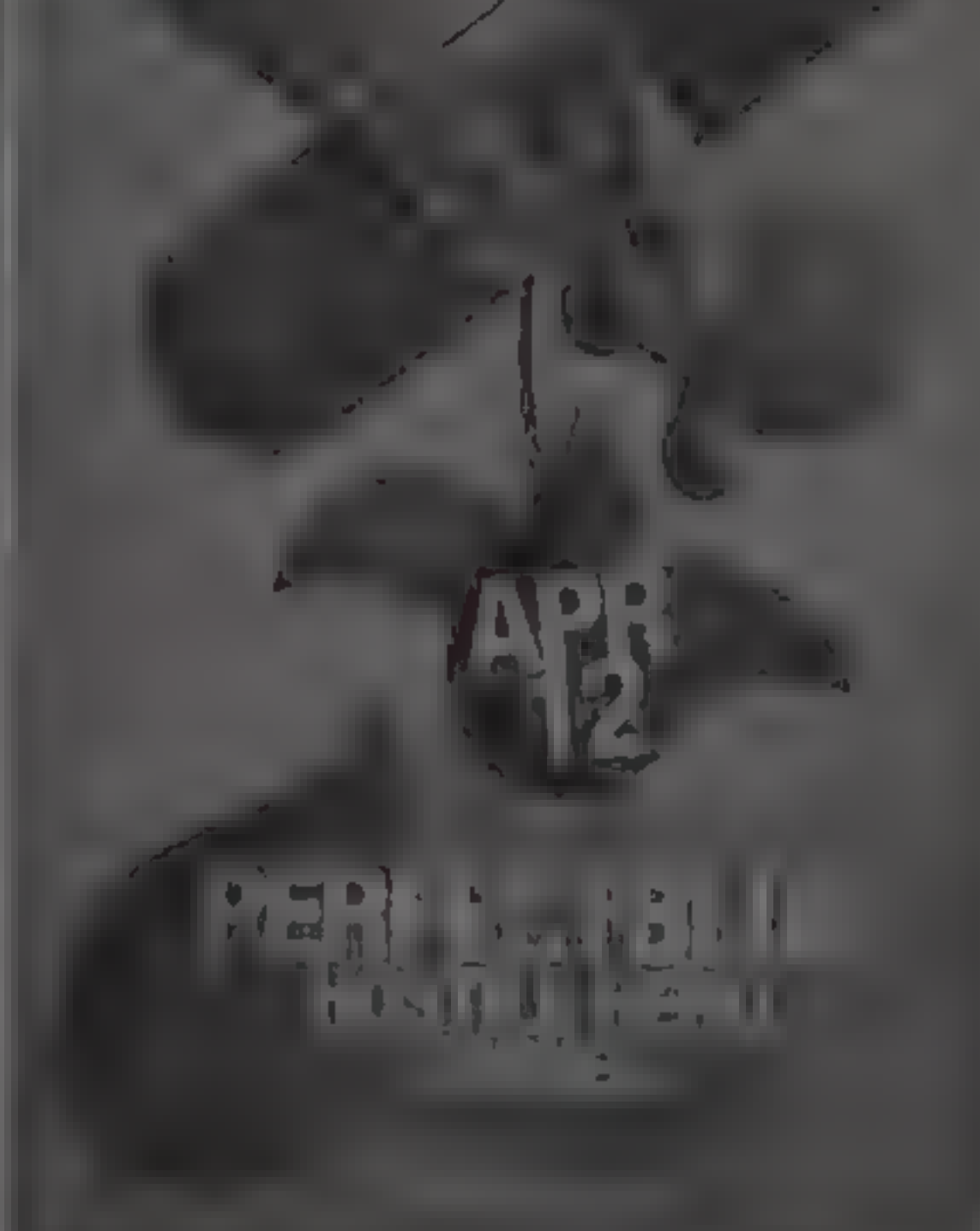
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MUSIC WEEKLY

STRATHCONA BAPTIST CHURCH Hands together for community Slowburn, all ages 8-30pm-12:00am, \$12.50 at Strathcona Baptist Church

TEMPLE FIVE with Daphur Theodore 1 Size Fits All, DJ Age, 9pm

ORCA LOUNGE 10pm

VELVET UNDERGROUND 10pm

YARDBIRD SUITE Des Daniels with Chris Andrew Trio, 8pm (door), 9pm (show), \$14 (member)/\$18 (guest)

WINSPEAR CENTRE 10pm

SPINNYWORLD 10pm

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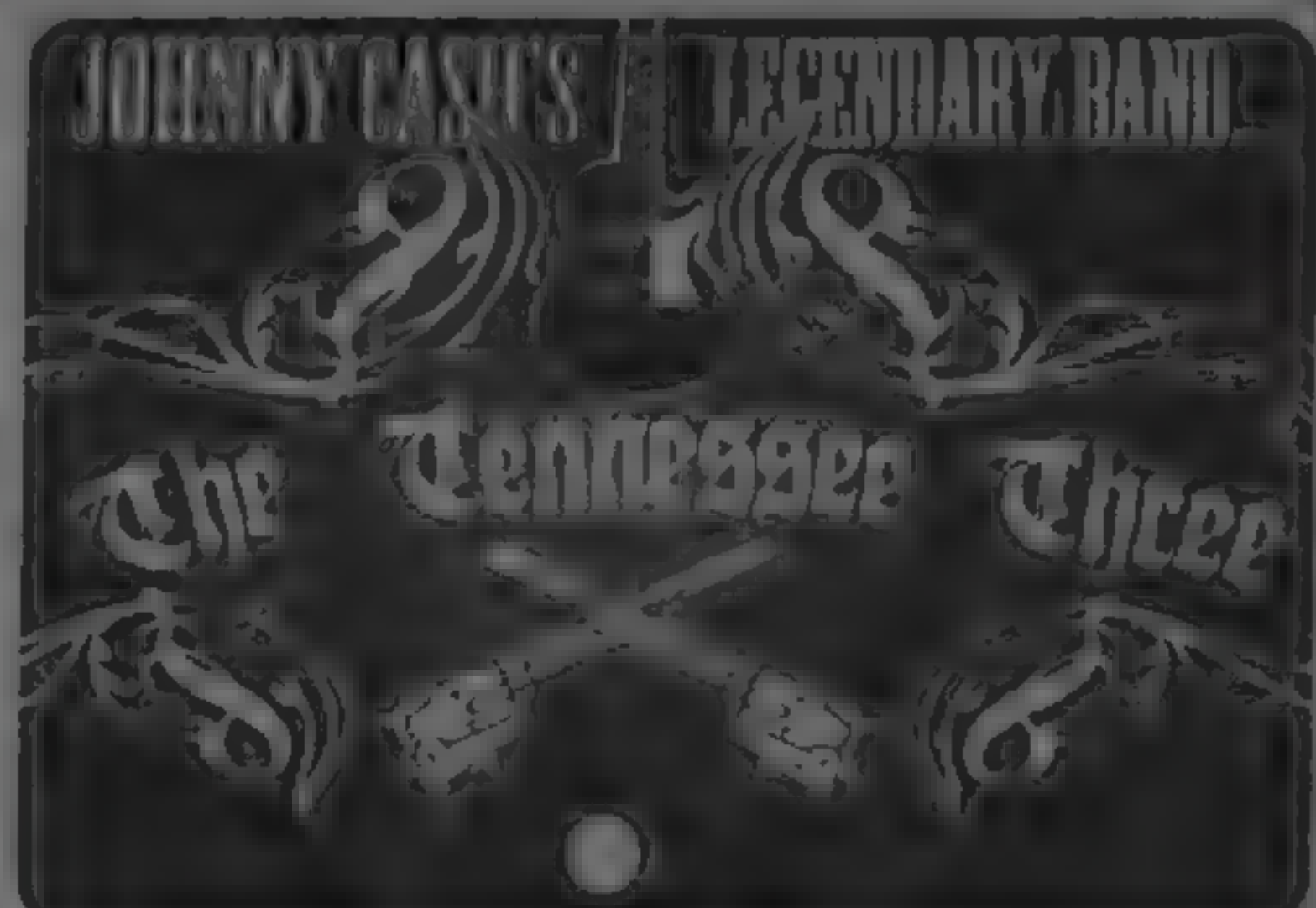
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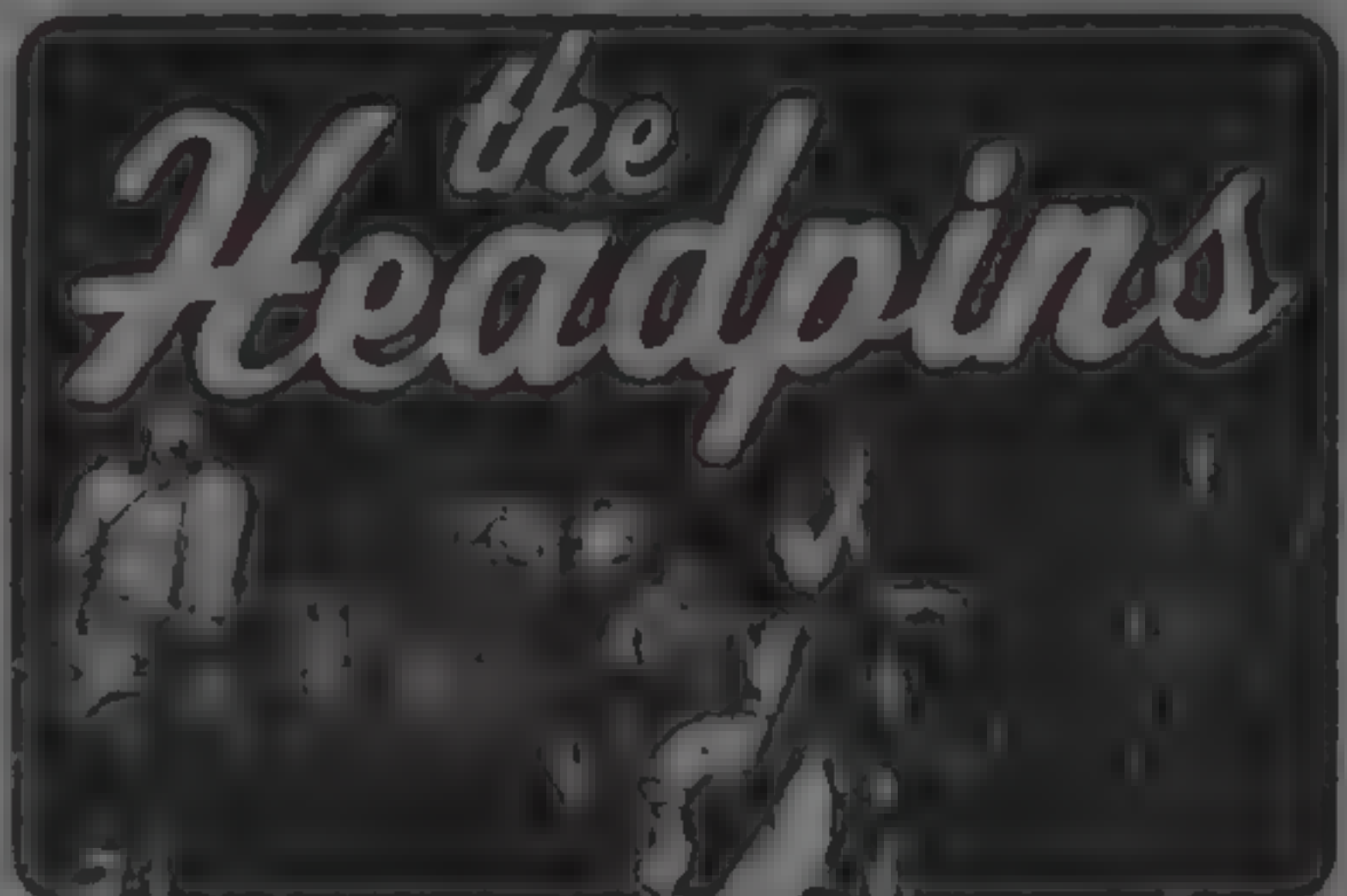
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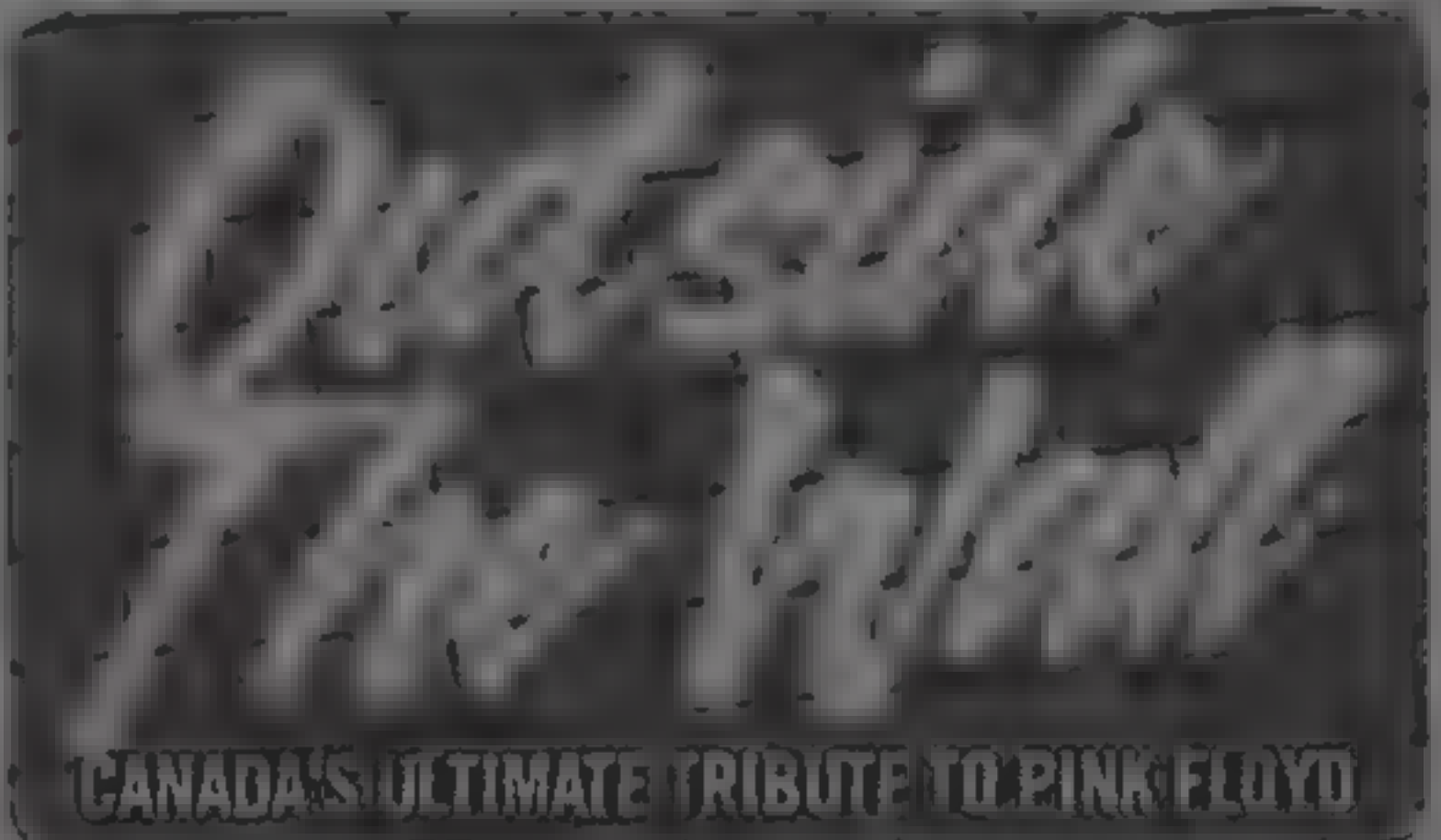
APR 19

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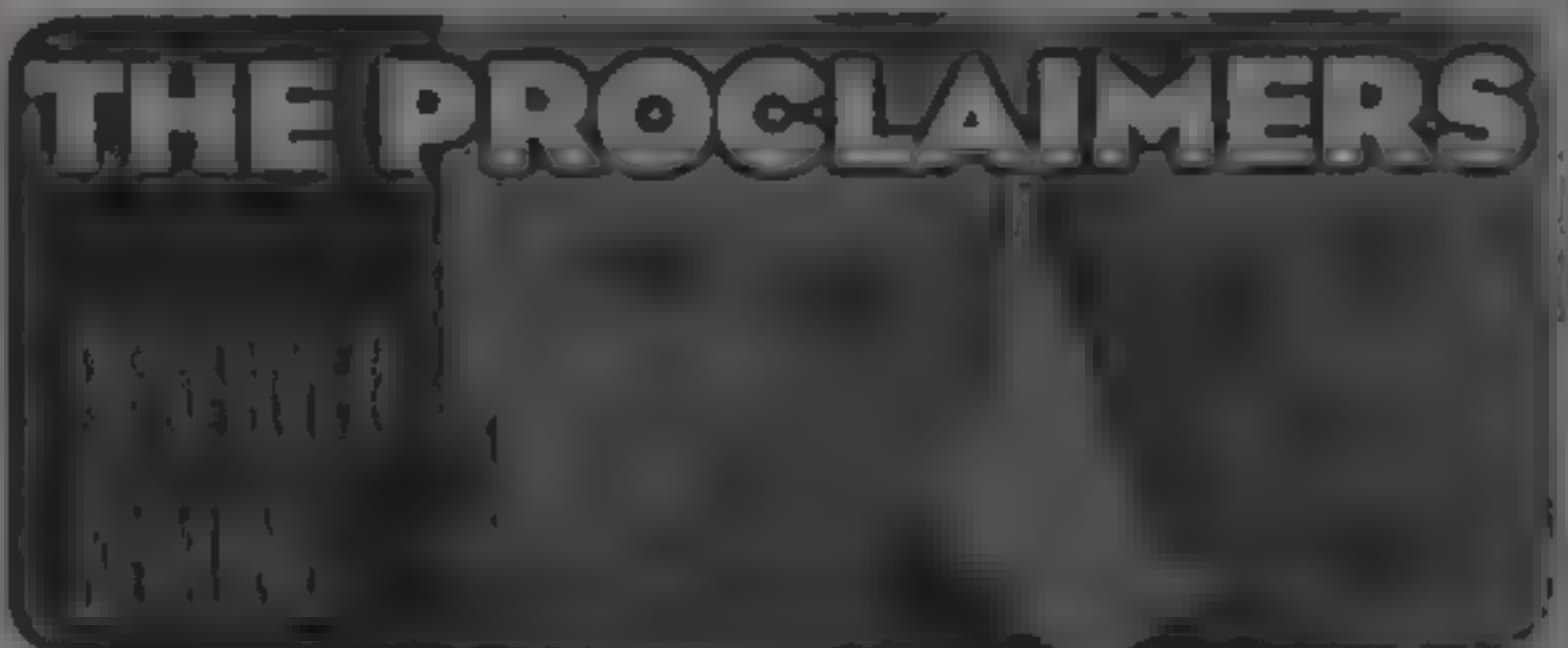
MAY 2/3

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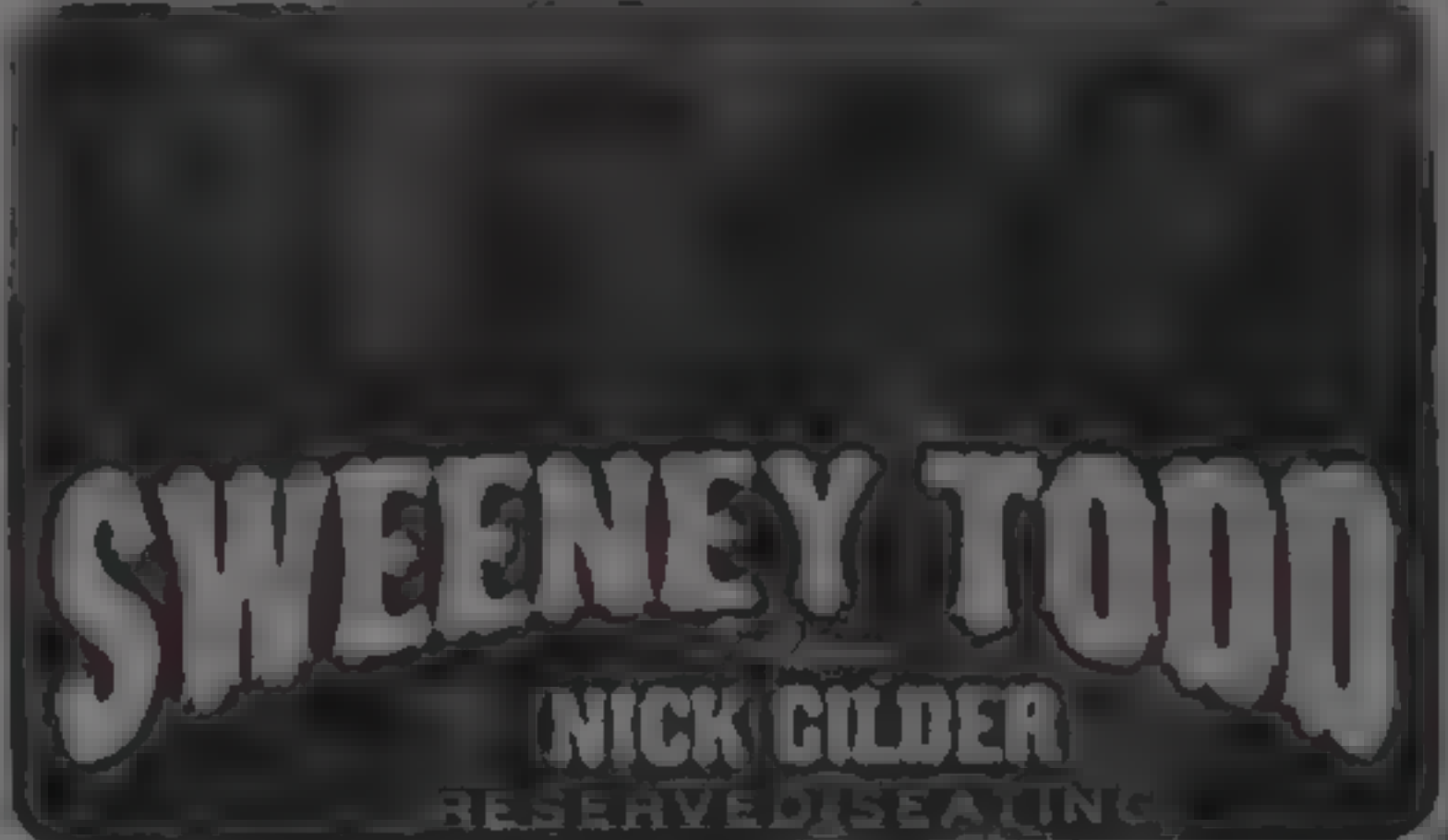
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MAY 10

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It takes two if you're gonna duet

MUSIC BACKLASH BLUES

From lyrical couplets to the rhythm section to the tango, music has always been defined by measures of two. The duet is a basic yet powerful example of collaboration and it has endured decades of industry shifts to remain a useful tool in music marketing as well as artistry. Watching Anne Murray with Jann Arden during this past Sunday's Juno Awards was a curiously calming patch during a frequently turbulent digital feed and a pretty shaky night overall. Their song, a selection from Murray's *Anne Murray Duets: Friends & Legends* album, demonstrated not only mastery over the form, but also, the undying human interest in vocal harmony.

From a 1950s record plugger's perspective, it's easier to promote a song about falling in love or getting in the car with a boy when you have a visual, interpersonal dynamic to direct people to. This para-

digm has always worked best with musicals such as *Grease*, where viewers could watch characters they identified with deal with difficult situations, dance, sing and perhaps even consummate their feelings for each other. This format has been updated by today's urban dance flicks like *Step Up* and *You Got Served*, in a similar manner to that of the duet and the rapped-sung collaboration.

In 2002, as a result of the rapidly mutating R&B and rap strains in the US pop mainstream, the Grammy Awards were forced to create a new category to account for their amalgamation and chart dominance. This category, simply called Best Rap/Sung Collaboration, is the best modern equivalent of the old piano duet. The past couple years have awarded Rihanna and Jay-Z's "Umbrella," Justin Timberlake and TI's "My Love" as well as Usher and Ludacris's monster hit "Yeah!" These songs all have a few common factors: they present the positive results of potential commingling, they place importance on specific words until they lose meaning and their accompanying visuals

present the same interpersonal dynamic presented by '50s musical posters.

The song that brought me to analyze the duet format in the first place is the Atlantic Records single "American Song" by UK singer Estelle and US rap superstar Kanye West. With a killer Euro-electro backbeat courtesy of Will.i.am from Black Eyed Peas (seriously), this tune has more crossover potential than Allen Iverson on the US Olympic Team. Amid ourling saw synths and occasional shout-outs of French filter disco, Estelle discusses the appealing nature of the content, street-wise American male. Yeah, that's right! A European who likes Americans! Kanye jumps in to relay his personal experience (how great he is, etc.) along with humorous regional punchlines ("Dress smart like a London bloke, Before he speak, his suit bespoke"), thus completing a very satisfying pop single. The duet continues to undo new layers of singular artists while keeping us, the audience, intrigued by their newfound attachments. Real or contracted, it's still a working tradition. **V**

PLEASANTVIEW COMMUNITY
Fiddle jam hosted by the Wild Rose Old Time Fiddlers Society, 7pm

KOSK BOWL Monday Jam hosted by Sherry-Lee Wisor/Mike McDonald (alternating), 9pm-12am

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LEGENDS PUB hosted by Gary Thomas

THE PLYMOUTH

SHOPIERS PUB Star Jam, hosted by Alicia Tait and Rikky Sidcar, guest guitarist Paul Fagnan, 8pm

8-10pm
SINGING SKY Bashment Tuesdays: O.B., Chrome Nine, no cover
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Kenny
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WILD WEST Five On The Side

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BANK ULTRA LOUNGE Wed Nights with DJ Harley

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE First, Gitter, Will, Wayne, DJ, Rides, Worst Wrecks, R. Jam every Wed with DJ Butler, no cover, live music, live a night, Woodtop, RetroActive, Alternative '80s at 1:30, New Wave at 1:30, and Roll with DJ

BUDDY'S Hump day with DJ

CAMPBELL

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LEGENDS PUB Hip hop/R&B with DJ Spincycle

NEW CITY LIQUID LOUNGE Wednesday, no minors, no cover

NICO DIAMOND'S Punk and metal every Wednesday

RED STAR Wednesday

STARLITE ROOM Weds style Wednesdays, Hip-Hop, 9pm

STOLL'S B-party Wednesday, House, reggae, and a lot of other stuff, 10pm-1am, 1542, www.bartparty.net

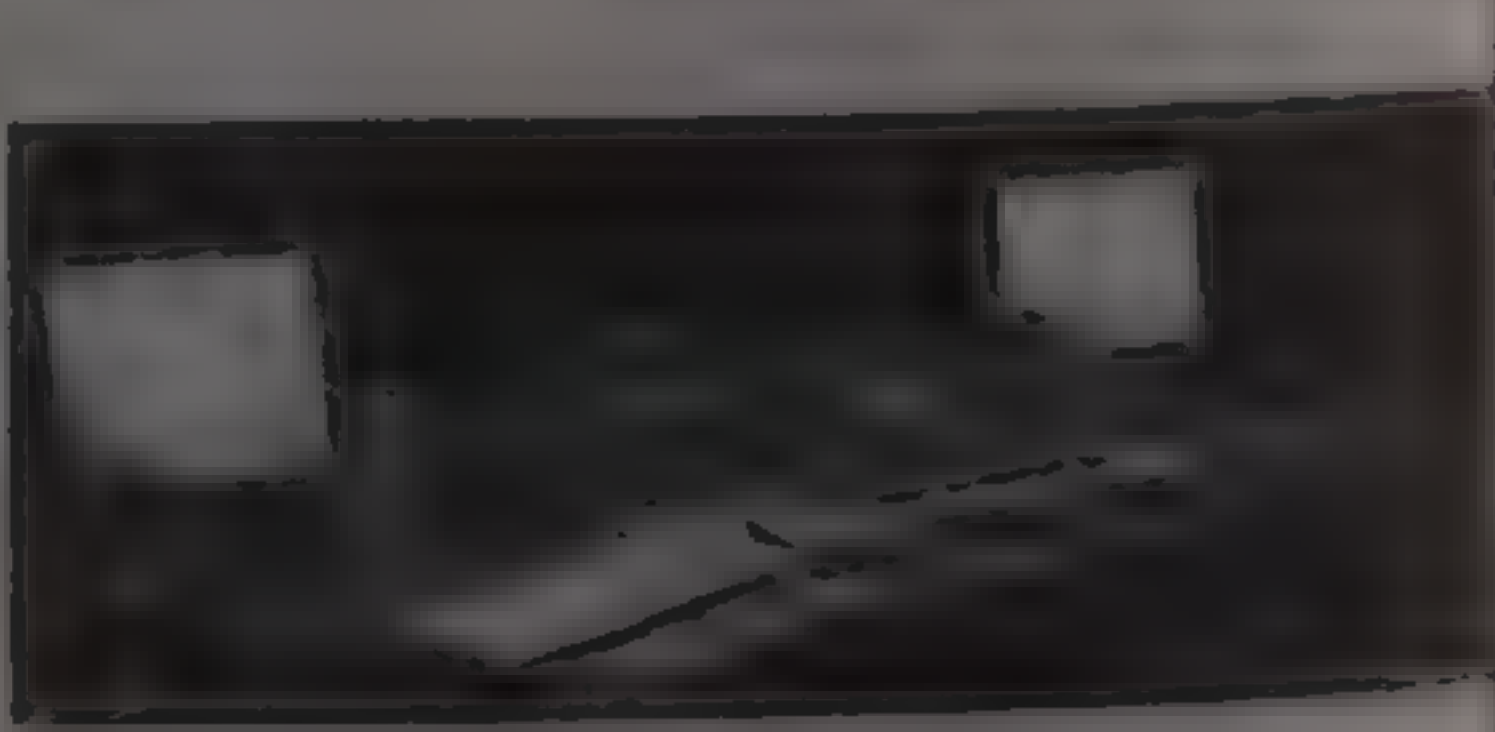
WUNDERBAR Wednesday, new DJ, no cover

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JUNE 21 & 22

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FACE TO FACE • THE DUDES • PRIDE TIGER • CRASH PARALLEL

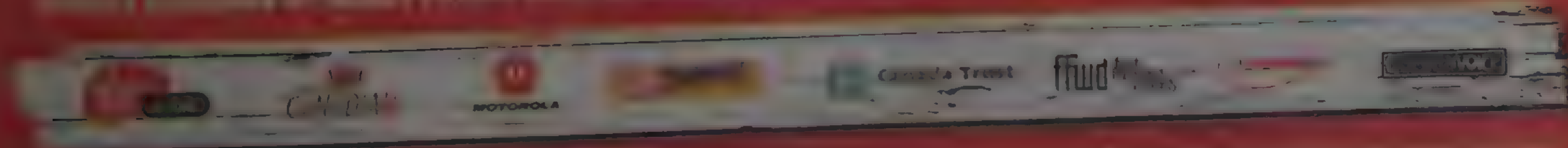
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JUST ANNOUNCED - ON SALE FRIDAY

BATTLES

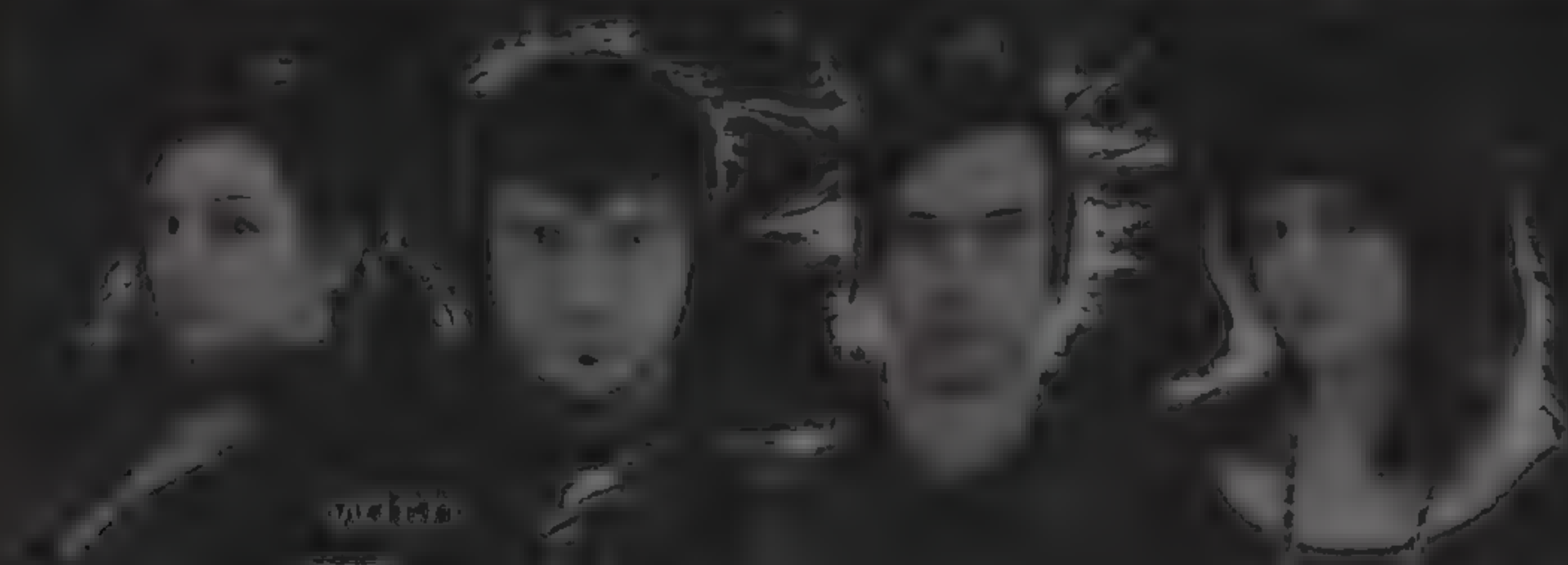
MAY 28 • STARLITE ROOM

DOORS 8 PM / 18+ ID
TIX ALSO AT MEGATUNES, BLACKBYRD & LISTEN
PRIVATE CLUB - MEMBERS & GUESTS

VUE

JUST ANNOUNCED - ON SALE SATURDAY

mindless self indulgence



THE BIRTHDAY MASSACRE

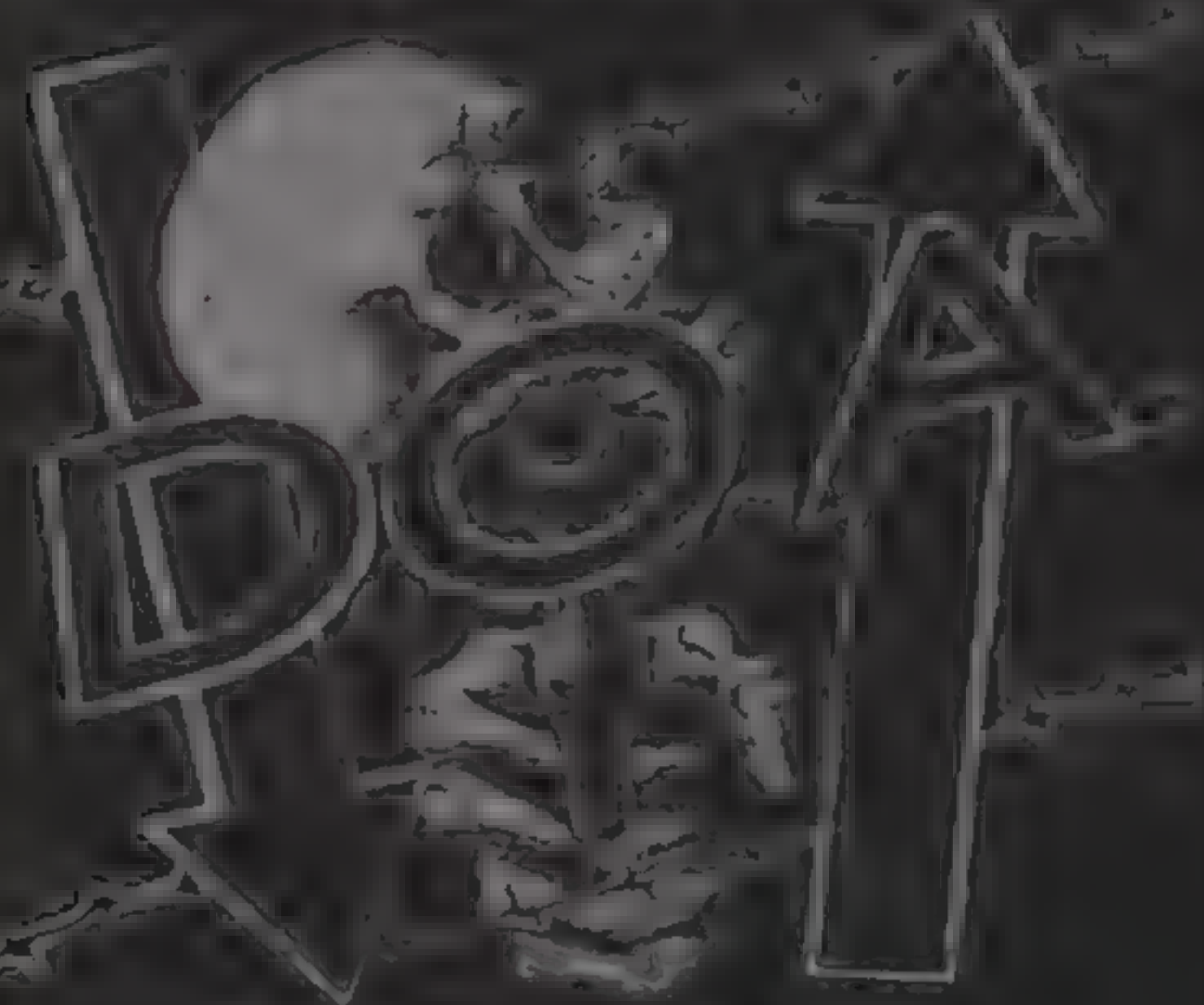
JUNE 3
STARLITE ROOM

DOORS 7 PM - ALL AGES - TIX ALSO AT MEGATUNES, BLACKBYRD & LISTEN
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VUE

ON SALE FRIDAY

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VUE

SAINT ALVIA

MAY 22
VELVET UNDERGROUND

DOORS 8 PM - 18+ ID REQ. TIX ALSO AT MEGATUNES, BLACKBYRD & FS (WEM)

VUE

SEA WOLF

JUNE 10
VELVET UNDERGROUND

DOORS 8 PM - 18+ ID REQ. TIX ALSO AT MEGATUNES, BLACKBYRD & FS (WEM)

VUE

3 Inches of Blood
TOUR of CHAMPIONS I

with BISON

APRIL 10 - STARLITE ROOM

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VUE

CHLODUS PROTEST

APRIL 14
EDMONTON EVENT CENTRE

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VUE

CARIBOU

WITH GUESTS F**K BUTTONS

APRIL 15
STARLITE ROOM

DOORS 8 PM - 18+ ID REQ. TIX ALSO AT MEGATUNES, BLACKBYRD & LISTEN

VUE

AS I LAY DYING

MAY 8
STARLITE ROOM

7 PM - ALL AGES - TICKETS ALSO AT MEGATUNES, BLACKBYRD, FS (WEM)

VUE

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U2 3D
 BONO, THE EDGE, ADAM CLAYTON,
 LARRY MULLEN JR.
 DIRECTED BY CATHERINE OWENS AND MARK PELLINGTON
 APRIL 19, 11

FILES / bryan@vancouverweekly.com
 It's a sense that U2, referred to as "the band in the world" by music critics, has, like the band members, should be featured in a movie. The band has been putting on increasingly visual performances for years, and it really upped the ante with the Zoo TV tour—and all of the subsequent worldwide jaunts (mirrored by the 12-foot high and 12-foot wide lap is not exactly a puzzle). U2 3D documents the Latin American tour of the band's 2005 *Vertigo* album, featuring footage from seven different shows as well as a special

performance the band delivered in order to capture close-up shots without affecting the audience's view.

As expected, U2 puts on an incredible show. The film is comprised of mostly well-known hits with only a few surprise choices, and even casual fans of the band should be able to get into the music. The performance is full of the earnest emotion and the politics that the band has come to be known for. With a reading of the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights forming the bridge of "Miss Sarajevo," and a desperate plea for Muslims, Christians and Jews to learn to coexist, the only thing missing from Bono's stable of political causes is Project Red, although I'm sure there were some t-shirts available. The politics of U2 are all mixed up within the music, however, and certainly don't take away from the performance—in fact, with this band, a show might even feel empty without politics.

While the show itself is well done, as a concert film, *U2 3D* falls a little flat. The approach is cool and all, but after the

third song you kind of get used to the novelty of it, and with the 3-D effect being the only thing setting this film apart from a simple recording of a concert, it doesn't make the experience all that memorable. Unlike, say, Talking Heads' *Stop Making Sense*—which presented the concert as a stage play, ultimately culminating in the "Big Suit" kabuki-style spectacle that became a visual shorthand for the band—or the Rolling Stones' *Shine a Light*—which shows the preparations for the film and utilizes archival footage to fill out the movie—*U2 3D* doesn't give the audience anything extra to get excited about. Also, apart from drummer Larry Mullen Jr, who must be moisturizing regularly, 3-D doesn't really do the band members any favours in the emerging wrinkle department.

All in all, hardcore fans of the band will be thrilled to be closer to their idols than they could ever hope to be otherwise, but those expecting a classic concert film experience might be a little disappointed. ▽

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 AND
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SAT
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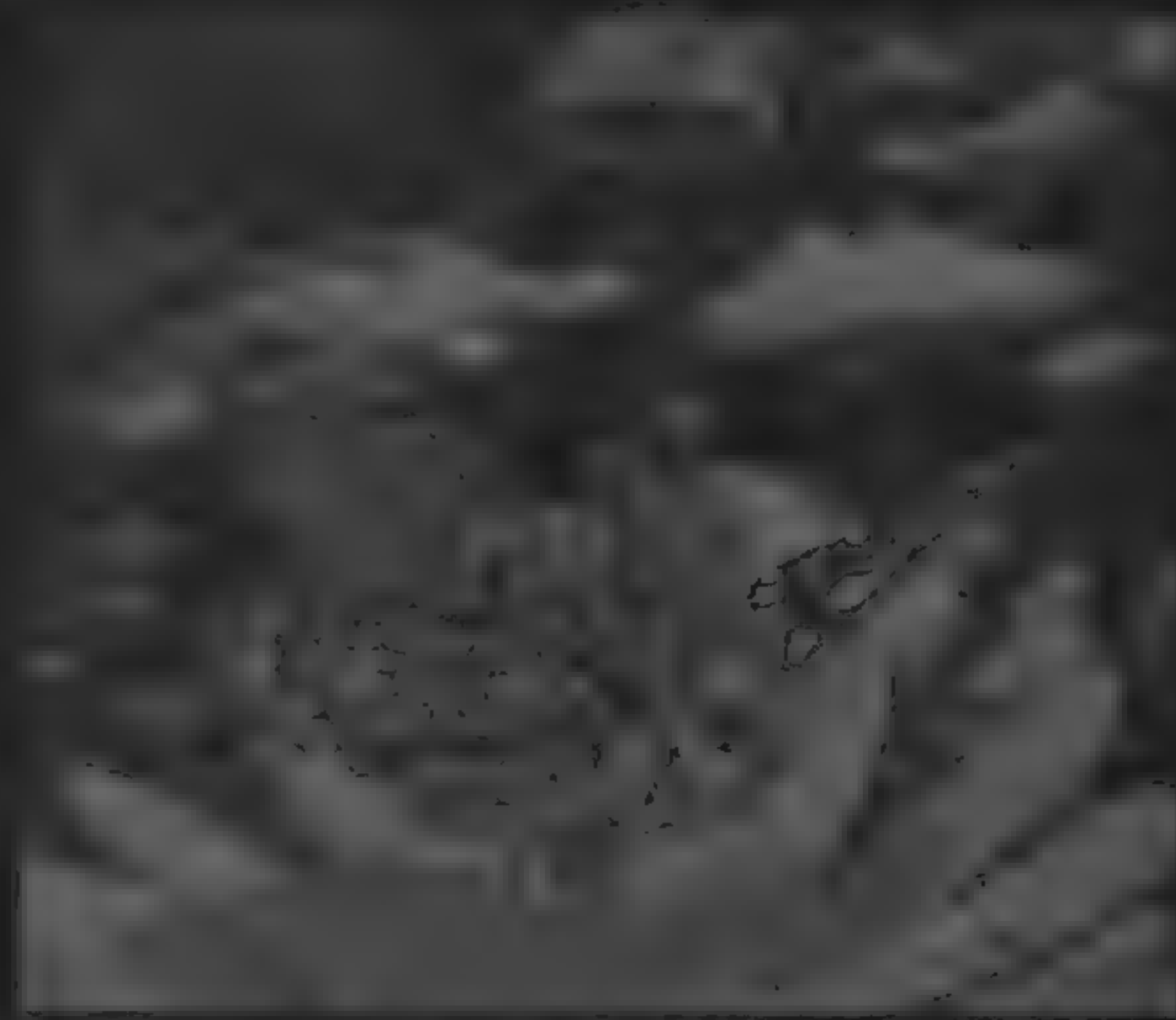
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If there wasn't so much hype about Martin Scorsese's role at the helm of *Shine a Light*, the new film documenting the Rolling Stones' 2006 performance at the Beacon Theatre in New York City, then the film might not be so disappointing. Scorsese is a man who certainly knows his way around a music film, having previously put together *The Last Waltz*, the excellent documentary on the Band's farewell concert, along with the more recent but still extremely well done *No Direction Home: Bob Dylan*. But here he seems to have lost his way.

The director knows that every great rock film has some sort of conflict at its heart—*The Last Waltz* had the Band breaking up under the pressure of 10 years on the road—but his attempt at setting up the scenario is clumsy and a little sad. Cameras capture Scorsese trying his best to get a set list out of the band so that he can plan out his shots, while Mick Jagger, Keith Richards, Charlie Watts and Ronnie Wood concern themselves with other, more important things, like impromptu backstage jams. Certainly it lets the viewer know that the band is rock 'n' roll through to its soul and has little need for Hollywood's rules, but Scorsese's approach is so heavy handed that it's difficult to sit through those opening scenes without wondering why he felt that the film would be well-served by tacking on that sort of introduction.

the archival interview footage that he sprinkles throughout the film between performances. The purpose seems to be to age the band from its youth through to today by using interviews spanning the years, but there is so much emphasis on Jagger's youthful optimism that the band might last another year or two, and his later admission that he can still picture himself making music at 60, that it feels too forced. The truth is, these guys are past 60 now and everyone can see them

still up on the stage doing their thing without Scorsese emphasizing the point.

AS CHOPPY AS THE documentary aspects of the film are, though, the concert scenes are the opposite—stunningly filmed, and the band attacks the songs like this is the last chance it will have.

But the Stones don't do it all alone here. Just as the band has done for every splashy concert that its had cameras at since the *Steel Wheels* trek, the Stones bring out three musical guests to share the stage. The first one is the White Stripes' Jack White, who comes out grinning ear to ear and gripping an acoustic guitar, taking a go at "Loving Cup" from *Exile on Main St.* The performance is good—and it's nice to hear one of *Exile's* deeper album cuts dusted off—but it doesn't really generate the sort of fire that anyone who's seen White's own band live might hope for. It works, but in a way that's more serviceable than spectacular.

For the old blues tune "Champagne and Reefer," the band brings out Buddy Guy for the requisite moment where the musicians pay their dues to a real bluesman. The scene might be a little too cloying if Guy didn't take complete control of the stage, owning every lyric and every guitar note that he generates—so much so that Richards hands his own guitar to Guy at the end of the song and says simply, "It's yours," before walking away.

Christina Aguilera comes on surprisingly strong when she enters for "Live With Me," holding her own with Jagger and showing some real restraint for a change when it comes to her voice. Instead of wandering up and down the

scales, she keeps to the song's melody—for the most part anyway. Aguilera ends up providing an interesting counterpoint to Jagger's more primitive vocals, and she actually brings something extra to the song.

It's notable, too, that there's a moment during "Live With Me" that perfectly breaks down the separate approaches that Jagger and Richards take with music. Aguilera backs towards Jagger and the singer moves in for some onstage grinding with the tiny female vocalist; the camera cuts over to Richards and we see him lost in the sound of Bobby Keys's saxophone, seemingly oblivious to everything except the moment where two old friends—Keys has been playing with the Stones since 1969—come together in the music that swirls around them.

AND THAT'S WHAT makes the concert footage so impressive in *Shine a Light*. It's not the cinematography, or the massive IMAX screen or even the sound of the film. No, it's the music that the Rolling Stones run through up on the stage, covering several decades worth of songs and making them sound just as vital today as they ever have. It's an impressive achievement, and the musicians who share the stage with the core members deserve much of the credit. Backup singers Lisa Fischer and Bernard Fowler have been with the band since 1989, and pianist Chuck Leavell's stay goes back to 1982. The result is a band that is tight, sounding like a whole rather than a few core members and a bunch of backup musicians.

CONTINUES ON PAGE 71

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Where Music Comes to Play!

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ON SALE APRIL 11 AT 10AM

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Butler in the Starlite Room with the guitar

CAROLYN NIKODYM / carolyn@vuweekly.com

When John Butler picked up the guitar at 16, he made a friend. The instrument was a constant buddy, something with which he could talk, share his hopes and his heartbreak.

Multiply 16 by two and you have John Butler now, and he still finds comfort in music. Songs, he says, are like diary entries. They are the place where he can scream and shout about the things he's trying to make sense of, and not just tattered relationships. No, there are also songs about settling beefs without violence and Hurricane Katrina.

Butler even stirred up some contro-

PREVIEW
MAY 24, 25, 26 PM
JOHN BUTLER TRIO
WITH GUESTS
STARLITE ROOM, SOLD OUT

versy with his lyrics to "Gov' Did Nothing"—a song about Hurricane Katrina on the Trio's latest, *Grand National*—where he asks "do you really think that the Gov would do nothin' if all those people were white?"

But for the American-born Aussie, there's a lot more to music than the ideas he can lay out in words—it's the whole package.

"It's an amazing thing when you hear, for example, major or minor

chords and you can actually get these distinct feelings from how you play an instrument," Butler says. "And then you put words on top of it and melody, not to mention intention from the artist—like a goal or a mission, an intention, and it's just a very powerful medium."

"I can't explain it because I don't know enough about quantum physics to tell you why the human mind and body reacts the way it does," he laughs. "But it's an amazing thing. You can put on 'Root Down' by the Beastie Boys and the next thing I am shaking my ass and laughing. It's just a beautiful thing and I think that's why it's powerful, because it's a mood enhancer, and it's thought provoking and it's definitely very emotive."



BUTLER BEGAN HIS interest in music's influence when he started busking on the streets of Perth and found himself getting invited on stage. Eventually, he felt that drums and bass needed to figure into what he was doing and the John Butler Trio was born. It's had several incarnations, but these days he's joined by bassist Shannon Birchell and drummer...

Although the Trio is not re-inventing the musical wheel by any means, its honest fusion of blues and roots has won the hearts of many Australians and other fans around the world.

Butler may be dubbed the "million dollar hippy" because of the success, but, between a heavy tour schedule, record label and JB Seed—an art grant organization he runs with his wife—he's earned every ounce of it.

"I'm surrounded by a great team," he says. "It's something that I learned from my dad a long, long time ago. He was talking about this millionaire who couldn't read or write. He had a great intuition and he picked his employees himself and he looked them in the eye and he surrounded himself with good people. I can read and write, but I take that story to heart and I try to surround myself with some very honorable people full of integrity. So I don't do a whole lot of the work. I still make a lot of the decisions, but that's part of the parcel of being a human being."

"You have to be in charge of your destiny, no matter what you do, and you're not, you tend to run into some big hurdles." ▽

FROM PAGE 69

What is striking about the band's sound during the concert is that all of the songs sound as though they belong to the musicians on stage. With that many years of material to choose from, it would be easy to end up with a show that sounds patched together with too many sounds from

different eras. Instead, "As Tears Go By," a song that Jagger says is one of the very first ones that he and Richards wrote, fits in right alongside the title track from 1978's *Some Girls*. It's clear that the band is still evolving, even if it is a little slower these days than when the musicians were at their peaks in the early '70s. Richards even reworks the main riff to "Satisfaction" with some thrashy power chords, making the song sound

edgier and more immediate than it has in many a year.

Ultimately, *Shine a Light* fails as a documentary, never really, well, illuminating the band any more than has been in the past. It comes off as a muddled mishmash of concert footage, archival interviews and Scorsese's own intrusive appearances on screen. As a concert film, though, it's pretty spectacular to see a band that has outlived pretty much all the others and has actually

found its groove as a live act again after a good number of years of flailing around and trying to survive.

And there is one breathtaking shot during "Champagne and Reefer" where the camera holds on a close up of Richards, who has a cigarette clamped between his teeth for a brief moment before he spits it out and there is nothing left but a cloud of ashes falling around him. I imagine that is very much how Richards himself will eventually go

out: rock 'n' roll and then, "BOOMPH!"
Nothing but ash. ♡

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PREVIEW
FRI, APR 11 (7 PM)
LARA YULE SINGH
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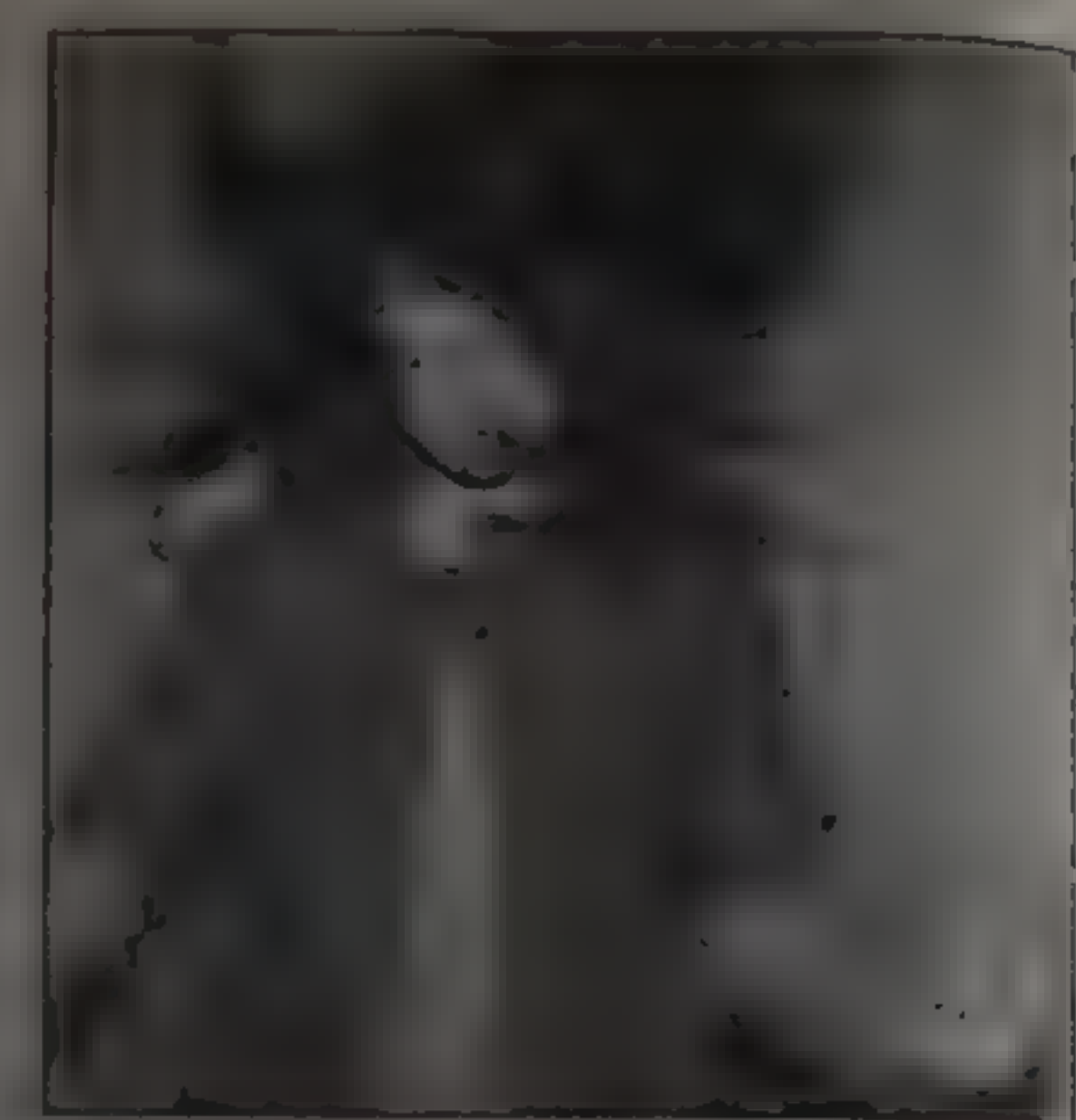
EDEN MUNRO / eden@vancouverweekly.com
The Great Divine. It's a loaded title for an album, conjuring up the sort of religious imagery that often leads to long and animated debates. For Edmonton's Lara Yule Singh, though, the choice was one founded in the complete sound and look of her latest album.

"It was kind of an all-encompassing choice after I had created the art and after the overall sound of the album existed. That was my original choice and then I went through a whole bunch of other ones and it just, to me, encapsulated the overall quality," she explains over an early morning coffee in a Jasper Ave shop. "The first thing that people are going to think about is Christianity which is not my intention, but I don't really have control of that once it leaves my hands. I just decided I was OK with that because it works in the concept of the whole thing and when I saw the title it touched my heart and that was the most important part, so I was like, 'OK, people are going to think what they want, but that's OK.'"

Yule Singh admits that she has no problem with listeners interpreting her songs in their own ways. In fact, she says that she completely understands that the nature of creating music is very much akin to the creation of a dialogue between the performer and the listener.

"For me, there's always a connection with the people who are listening to it, so no matter what they are thinking or perceiving or ideas that they have about it, the underlying quality of what I'm saying and what they're receiving is still there," she explains. "So even if details are misconstrued or whatever, it ultimately doesn't matter because the true nature of what I'm saying is coming through and I know that people are getting it."

"I'm really seeing that, too, with journalists—how I can say something and then someone will take it totally differently or go somewhere else with it or literally change what I've said and I'm like, 'OK, well that's just the way it is and it's



not personal," she continues. "It's just how people do their jobs and as listeners that's how people listen, they make it a personal experience and that's OK."

Anyone who's seen Yule Singh performing live will be aware of her adaptability to different performing formats. While *The Great Divine* finds her working with a sound that is layered with instruments, she can easily strip things down when she needs to.

"I do quite a bit only out of necessity at this point. I want to go quite far musically when I'm recording and I do a lot of it myself—almost all of it—and have this nice little keyboard that I can [use to] add samples," she says, describing her approach to recording. "But as far as the live sound thing goes it's not right on. It's kind of less developed live, but I capture the essence."

It's easy to tag an artist like Yule Singh with the singer-songwriter label and she doesn't mind that at times realizing the occasional usefulness for a shorthand of sorts when describing her music, but she makes it clear that she doesn't perceive herself as sitting at that comfortably within that category.

"That's the most basic way that you could refer to me, and that's OK, but I see myself as a musician," she states confidently. "[Playing the] guitar was only for me just a necessity, but I don't love guitar. That's totally cool if other people want to do that, but I want to try as many instruments as I can actually play without sucking totally—and even if I suck totally, that's OK, that's artistic too—but I'm a musician. I see myself more as a composer, a creator." ▽

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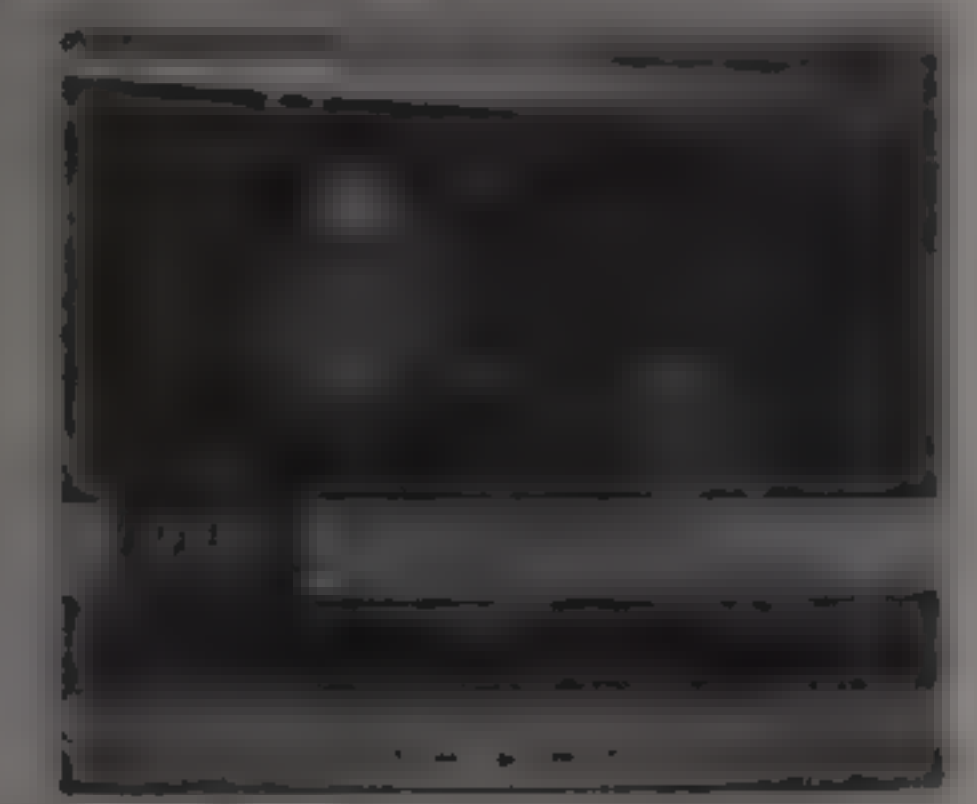
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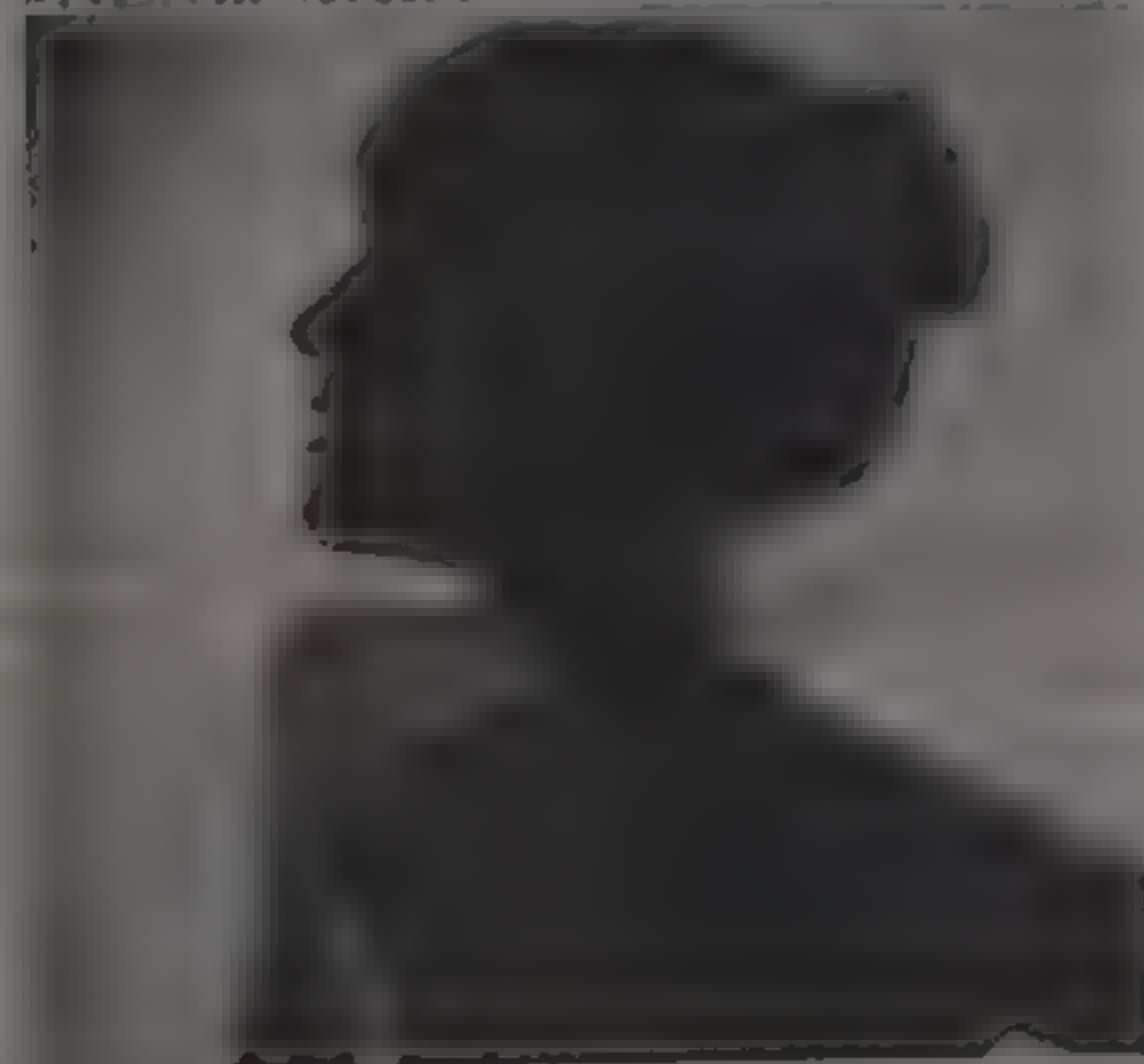
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ALBUM REVIEWS

NEWSOUNDS

CARLENE CARTER
STRONGER
YEP-ROCK

MARY CHRISTA O'KEEFE / marychrista@vuweekly.com
As part of the blended First Family of Country, one expects Carlene Carter's first record in over a decade to cover her grief from the passing of mother June Carter Cash and stepfather Johnny Cash. Threads of loss are present in *Stronger*, but Carter's idea of homage is less about dwelling on closing doors than two-stepping through new ones. Most of *Stronger*'s tracks are buoyantly uptempo and crafted in defiantly contemporary polished country-rock that well suits her Nashville-girl-next-door voice, like the semi-autobiographical opener about a nice Southern girl led astray by her restlessly wild heart or the piano-driven redemptive romance tune "Bring Love." Missteps like "On to You" and "I'm So Cool" are harder to swallow: cheesy strutting-babe-with-attitude ditties that mark boundaries of taste in the genre. Yet Carter's periodic nods to family legacy make lesser material forgivable, including her eulogistic take on signature Cash/Carter tune "It Takes One To Know Me."

EMMA COOK
HIT & RUN
MAYBE MUSIC

MARY CHRISTA O'KEEFE / marychrista@vuweekly.com
Emma Cook has a lovely voice, in places reminiscent of Ani DiFranco's girly growl, but mostly a soulful croon that slides effortlessly across genres she fuses on her sophomore release, *Hit & Run*—a little jazz and

blues feeling, a touch of cabaret, some light folkiness and a dash of "I grew up listening to Tori Amos" mulched into earnest, middlebrow coffee shop music. Cook's album is technically proficient and probably crowd-pleasing, but also kind of dull and self-satisfied. Her lyrics are especially galling—clunky, overly literal and unsophisticated, like a high school student debate team leader pulling her worldview from Oprah's book club selections and episodes of *Felicity*. Bottom line: if you like Chantal Kreviazuk, add Emma Cook to your playlist now. If you demand a little more nuance, check back with Cook in a few years to see if her life experience has caught up with her undeniable talent.

REM
ACCELERATE
WARNER BROS.

SCOTT HARRIS / scott@vuweekly.com
After a string of three (four?) disappointing and largely forgettable studio albums, the Athens, Georgia supergroup has finally hit a stride reminiscent of the heady days before drummer Bill Berry left the band. The aptly named *Accelerate*, the first studio release by Stipe and company since 2004, is a pared-down, guitar-driven affair that bursts out of the gates and sustains itself with trademark Buck riffs and Mills harmonies. It also features the welcome return of the most political and polemical lyrics from frontman Michael Stipe since 1988's *Green*, from the scathing indictment of hollow patriotism of "Man-Sized Wreath" ("Well, I am not deceived by pomp / And odious conceit") to the post-Katrina

"Houston" ("If the storm does kill me / The government will Cancel the funeral, it appears that REM isn't DOA after all.

DL INCIGNITO
A CAPTURED MOMENT IN TIME
UMTAH

BILL RADFORD / bill@vuweekly.com
This is hip hop that feels like it should come rolling out of a game phone. The beats are soulful and laid back, like the soundtrack to a summer barbecue filmed through a hazy lens—all muted horns, smoke and vibrating air. DL Incognito has been around for a while, and he gets occasional play on MuchMusic, so you might've heard him. His flow is good and he rides the beats well. The wordplay won't leave you breathless, but he's got a few good lines: "I'm working musician with none of the perks / Associated to the most common hip-hop verse." Hot.

LOS CAMPESINOS!
HOLD ON NOW, YOUNGSTER ...
ARTS & CRAFTS

KRISTINA DE GUZMAN / kristina@vuweekly.com
There was a time when the self-described "musical excess" from Los Campesinos! would have been refreshing to hear. This record is filled with exchanges between a male and female vocalist who appear to take turns singing out of tune (think Stars, with Aleksandra Campesinos sounding eerily like Amy Millan when she's singing on key, especially on "Death to Los Campesinos!") Meanwhile, the chorus of "Broken Heart beats Sound Like Breakbeats" seems like something pulled out of a Tegan & Sara handbook. Dissonant vocal overlaps, childlike singing and music drowned in pop form a formula that works occasionally ("You! Me! Dancing!"), but multiply that by 12 and even the most creative of indie band becomes the equivalent of emerging alt-rock bands who attempt the same goal but still end up sounding like Nickelback.

DAVID MARTIN
I HARDLY KNEW ME
ENDLING MUSIC

BRYAN SAUNDERS / bryansaunders@vuweekly.com
There's a chance audiences might like *I Hardly Knew Me*. Actually, if the audience is full of masochists, they'll absolutely love the first track, which is called "Stories," and, basically involves one minute and 13 seconds of various droning noises followed by two minutes and seven seconds of... well, more droning noises. The vocals are drowned-out by what some stew of recessive genes might describe as "music."

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Back two is titled "The End of Self" and actually just sounds like a pitiful "I" of the Fray's "Heaven Forbid." It, except for the intro and outro of "The End of Self," which are all-original material, and monotonous material at that.

Truthfully, the only half-decent songs on this entire album are "Yours and Mine" and "Be All, End All." However, even these two eventually become unbearably busy and drawn-out. Therefore, reasons to buy this album are non-existent—unless you're a masochist, of course.

MORCHEEBA DIVE DEEP

SCOTT HARRIS / scott@vueweekly.com

Following a single release with singer Daisy Martey, Morcheeba's Godfrey brothers (DJ Paul and guitarist Ross) opted to collaborate with a variety of singers on *Dive Deep* rather than try to find a permanent replacement for Skye Edwards, the talented vocalist on the first four Morcheeba albums. The result is a hit-and-miss release that seems unable to find any particular coherence or feel. There are some fine tracks, including the Judie Tzuke-fronted opener "Enjoy the Ride," "Run Honey Run" and "Gained the World," but the end result is nothing more than a tolerably "nice" but utterly unremarkable offering from a band that seems well past its prime.

VAN MORRISON KEEP IT SIMPLE STICK TO THE FACTS

BILL RADFORD / bill@vueweekly.com

Keep It Simple is aptly titled. Van Morrison's greatest strength remains his iconic voice, and it is front and center on this album. His unique phrasing makes the songs, even now that Morrison is almost at his 40th album. Few artists are this strong, for this long.

I was a little disappointed by "Don't Go to Nightclubs Anymore," though. It's not that the song is bad; it's just that the title was so cool that it was hard to live up to. The best song on the album is "Lover Come Back." It will prove to all that Morrison's still got it—nearly 40 years on.

EDMONTON PORTEOUS 3 AM SOMNIA

BILL RADFORD / bill@vueweekly.com

So my editor asked me if I liked "old, folkie music." I can't think of a better way to open this review. For a boy who grew up hanging out at the Edmonton Folk Festival, 3 AM feels like coming home. Porteous enlisted Andrew Loog Oldham as producer, who actually worked with the Beatles and the Rolling Stones back in the day. The disc includes a dreamy cover of "Please Please Me" by the Beatles, and the album takes the song back to its original conception as a ballad, blending it with pizzicato violins and sitar. It's a great track, and is bound to get 3 AM some attention.

What's that? Speak up, sonny

MUSIC ENTER SANDOR

STEVEN SANDOR
steven@vueweekly.com

When you write about music, the only real hazards you'll face are to your sanity and your hearing, with only the latter being all that important to your future in the business.

British music journalist Steve Lamacq wrote "Going Deaf For a Living," and it's as apt a title as there can be when it comes to writing about rock 'n' roll. According to the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, a rock concert is usually at 110 db, but being within six feet of an amplifier at a show is 120 db, which is about the same noise level as a jet engine.

While most music writers I know carry industrial-strength ear protection to shows, I've never been a fan. I find ear protectors muddy the sound of the show far too much for my liking, and they make it impossible to hear yourself yell drink orders at bartenders. Needless to say, I won't be the poster boy for any Health Canada hearing-safety commercials until I go totally deaf, when I will be a fine example case to trot out.

So, decades from now, when my hearing is limited to a dull ringing, what bands can I blame the most? When thinking about the loudest shows I have ever seen, making a list is really quite easy, as those over-the-top loud shows really stick out in my memory.

5. Tommie Sunshine: Yes, I am placing a DJ on the list. So there. If you ever listen to Tommie Sunshine mix, he really pushes the high ends. And, when you see him DJ in a tiny room with a

large sound system, those tweeter-testing mixes really hit you hard.

4. Jesus and Mary Chain: As far as large-arena or stadium shows go, the Jesus and Mary Chain put on the loudest exhibition I have seen. As part of the Lollapalooza tour, they managed to screech the malevolent guitar lead of "Reverence" through tens of thousands worth of skulls.

3. Dinosaur Jr: J Mascis is one of the greatest guitar players to have lived, and he insists on drilling it into your head at massive decibel levels. After not seeing the band for over a decade, I thought Mascis might have mellowed out when I saw Dinosaur Jr again last year. No luck. If anything, the band was louder than ever. Or I am getting old and crotchety.

2. Motörhead: Lemmy and company make going deaf contagious. Because they can't hear all that well, they crank the amps ridiculously high. When I saw Motörhead the first time, I stood in the front. After that, I have always stood near the back. Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice

1. My Bloody Valentine: If there was ever a show where I saw noise made for noise's sake, it came when I saw the Irish quarter tour in support of their all-time guitar-drone classic, *Loveless*. The band finished the show with a 15-minute blast of white noise, cranked so loud that my teeth hurt from rattling against themselves. You could physically feel the waves of sound hitting you; it felt like standing in a strong wind. It was unforgettable. ▽

Steven Sandor is a former editor-in-chief of *Vue Weekly*, now an editor and author living in Toronto.

HAIKU! QUICK SPINS

WHITEY AND TB PLAYER
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"I could do this." Then wonder,
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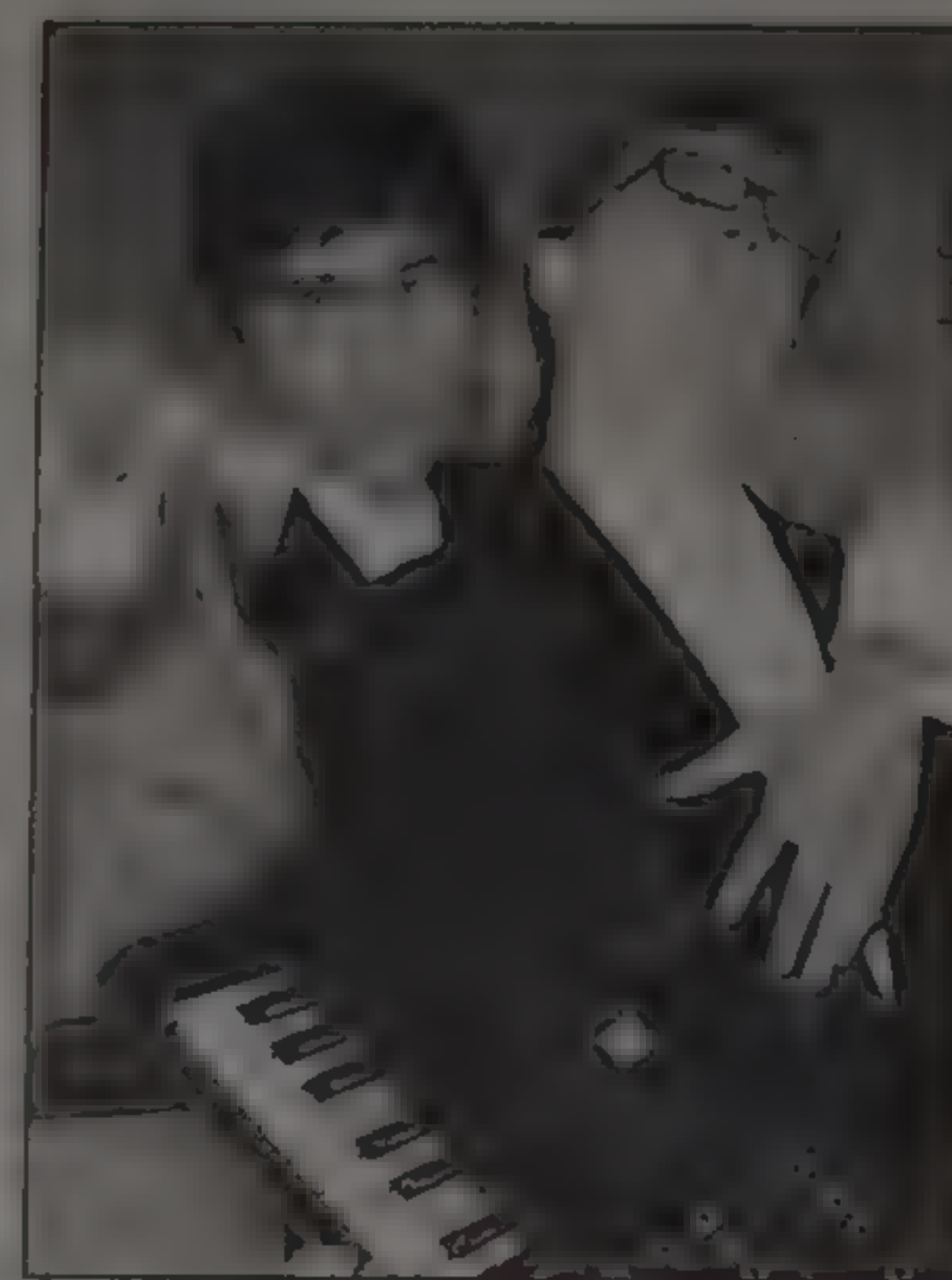
Dance, dance, feel it all around you

BRYAN BIRTLES / bryan@vnewweekly.com

Dance music is all about sex. From '70s disco, to Hi-NRG in the '80s, to the rise of rave culture and the fractioning of techno genres in the '90s, it's hard to imagine a dance song that isn't about sex, at least a little bit. Nowadays, electro and nu-rave are no different—it's all about 'gettin' down and bumpin' uglies. The secret is something that Barry White knew instinctively: lower frequencies mean lower inhibitions, and dance has bass in spades.

Dan Werb, of Toronto's **Woodhands**, has a good handle on the sexiness of dance music. Along with partner—uh, not *that* kind of partner—Paul Banwatt, Woodhands has devoted itself to facilitating dance floor dwellers in getting their freaks on by thinking about sex, singing about sex and having sex so that they can do the first two better. According to Werb, dance music's preoccupation with sex probably stems from the fact that they both deal with guttural reactions, instead of cerebral ones.

"When [dance music] is good, it doesn't hit your brain, it hits your groin. It's an awesome way of expressing yourself because it bypasses all that intellectual stuff," Werb explains. "Our music is all about immediate emotions. It's about catharsis and really connecting immediately to what you're experiencing."



PREVIEW

SUN, APR 13 (7:30 PM)
WOODHANDS
WITH CHRISTIAN HANSEN & THE AUTISTICS,
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Our shows are celebrations. They're not downers—they confirm you're still alive, still a human being. It's up-tempo and dance-y and fun."

WOODHANDS RAISES the fun level of its shows by playing instruments onstage—something that, in the past, electronic musicians were reluctant to do, whether because it added an element of uncertainty to the show or

because they simply couldn't. For Werb, laptop rockin' isn't bad, but it's just not for them.

"During our shows we really lock into each other and when we lock into each other it makes the performance an intimate experience. We can explore whatever we want because there's only two of us—we've been able to form a relationship that's keyed into each other," he says. "If a performer has a laptop onstage, it's like a black box thing—you don't know what is the laptop and what is the performer. They could be playing it right there with a synth patch on the laptop, but you just don't know. We want our audience to know each song is being sweated out right there. It's all about immediacy."

Being a group tagged with the "hipster" label—a label that often means an audience standing around, arms folded with maybe a bobbing head—Woodhands had to work to get its audience to react when the group started out, but nowadays everybody knows what to expect at one of its shows.

"We used to get a lot of apologies; people would come up to us after the show and say, 'Man, that was awesome! I'm so sorry we didn't dance,'" Werb recounts, reflecting on the difference between then and now. "Our hipsters dance. It's hard for them to not dance at all now, we always seem to get them at one point." ▽

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ZODIAC FREE WILL ASTROLOGY

ARIES (MAR 21 - APR 19)

High-definition TV makes everything look more vivid than standard broadcast technology. Images are so high-quality they almost appear 3-D. While this is enjoyable to viewers, some performers are uncomfortable with the way it reveals their skin's imperfections. Did you know that Brad Pitt has acne scars? I predict a metaphorically similar development for you in the coming weeks, Aries. Every little thing you do will be more highly visible and have greater impact than before. Whenever you've been 2-D, you'll become 3-D. That could turn out really well for you if you take it as a challenge to fine-tune your commitment to excellence and integrity.

TAURUS (APR 20 - MAY 20)

"When nothing is working very well," says astrologer Caroline Casey, "it might be a cosmic conspiracy to get you to experiment." Let's proceed as if that hypothesis were true, Taurus. Identify a place in your life where you're stuck, where everything you attempt meets with resistance, or where you don't have the motivation you'd like to feel. Then brainstorm about an experiment you could do that would break you out of the holding pattern. Proceed on the assumption that the universe will become friendlier and more helpful if you try an approach you've never used before.

GEMINI (MAY 21 - JUN 20)

What I hope you'll achieve in the coming days is a state of mind like that described by

Dan Linton, one of my readers. This is his report. "Last night I went to Wal-Mart with a friend who was returning some tools. I walked around the store while he was at the service desk. In the shampoo aisle an unusual man who looked like an Aborigine made extended eye contact with me. As he walked past he announced in a happy tone, 'Your mind is empty.' I was super excited and found my friend to tell him, 'Isn't that an insult?' he asked. 'No,' I said. The guy meant that my mind is clear, which is true. This is the first time in two years I've felt that my mind is free of shrunken expectations, limiting concepts, and emotional distortions."

CANCER (JUN 21 - JUL 22)

Normally you're inclined to massage problems until they relax, not bash problems until they break. Your preference is to paint fuzzy, impressionistic pictures rather than creating crisp snapshots. Nevertheless, the astrological omens indicate that in the next two weeks, you should take an approach recommended by Winston Churchill: "If you have an important point to make, don't try to be subtle or clever. Use a pile driver. Hit the point once. Then come back and hit it again. Then hit it a third time—a tremendous whack."

LEO (JUL 23 - AUG 22)

I hesitate to be so blunt, but the fact of the matter is that right now God is on your side. This is true even if you're an atheist. Simply put, the Divine Wow is listening to you more closely than She is to everyone else; She is more prone to slipping you little gifts than all of Her other children; She is plotting to reveal more useful inside information to you than She has in a long time. Here's a tip to ensure you'll get the maximum benefit out of

your goodies: use at least some of your fantastic luck to help people in need.

VIRGO (AUG 23 - SEP 22)

"On an average weekday," wrote Saul Bellow, "the *New York Times* contains more information than any contemporary of Shakespeare's would have acquired in a lifetime." But religious writer F Forrester Church adds a caveat to that imposing thought. In his book *Lifecraft: The Art of Meaning in the Everyday*, he writes, "The *Times* is a fine paper. But for all its information, it only hints, and then only occasionally, at what Shakespeare knew so well: that the beauty of the bird, the symbol of the snake, the courage of the pilot and the wonder of human love will always be touched with mystery." In accordance with your current omens, Virgo, I urge you to abstain from the *New York Times*' specialty and seek out Shakespeare-style soul food for thought.

LIBRA (SEP 23 - OCT 22)

"Where would the gardener be if there were no weeds?" asked ancient Chinese sage Chuang Tzu. To that I add: where would lawyers be without crimes? How would psychotherapists fare without neurotics? What would critics do without the stuff they love to diss? Now let's apply this line of thinking to you, Libra. What thing that you dislike also happens to be something you need? What condition that you're opposed to is essential in constructing your identity? This is a good time to acknowledge your own weaknesses and to disagree with and fight against.

SCORPIO (OCT 23 - NOV 21)

Marie Poland Fish was an oceanographer who invented a new form of underwater

sound detection for the navy. To perfect the technology, she spent years studying the sounds made by 300 different species that live in the sea. Her innovations allowed attack vessels to tell the difference between enemy submarines and schools of fish, thereby avoiding assaults on the fish. She's your role model for the coming week, Scorpio. May she inspire you to develop more foolproof methods for distinguishing between actual threats and the harmless influences that may superficially resemble them.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV 22 - DEC 21)

Here's the first thing you need to know about the current state of your destiny: "Everything is blooming most recklessly; if it were voices instead of colours, there would be an unbelievable shrieking into the heart of the night." That message comes to you from poet Rainer Maria Rilke. Here's the second piece of wisdom you should take with you everywhere you go. It's from Vladimir Nabokov: "For aren't you and I gods? Let all of life be an unfettered howl. Release life's rapture. Everything is blooming. Everything is flying. Everything is screaming. Laughter. Running."

CAPRICORN (DEC 22 - JAN 19)

Want to know a secret? I "predict" the present, not the future. In other words, I discern unconscious patterns and invisible influences that are affecting you now. I also try to inspire you to read your own mind so as to uncover feelings that you've been hiding from yourself. So I can't necessarily tell you what specific events will transpire in the coming days. But I do suspect the following things are true, although you may not be aware of them yet: You are in the

midst of redefining what home means to you. You've been neglecting a deep need that's a bit embarrassing to you. And there's a place in your foundation that's in disrepair and requires your attention.

AQUARIUS (JAN 20 - FEB 18)

Opening for travel in 1926, Route 66 ran from Arizona through three other states. It became a problem for fundamentalist Christians, who got obsessed with the idea that 666 is an evil number associated with the devil. As their toxic delusions increasingly poisoned America's collective imagination, there was a growing outcry to rename the road. Finally, highway authorities gave in to the pressure and officially banished 666, turning it into Route 191 in Arizona and Route 491 elsewhere. This is an idiotically superstitious example of an otherwise sound principle that actually has merit: altering the name of a person or thing can change the way it's perceived and possibly even transform its essential nature. I bring this up, Aquarius, because now is an excellent time for you to use this principle to your advantage. What or whom would benefit from a renaming?

PISCES (FEB 19 - MAR 20)

Please don't get sidetracked by the pursuit of minor dreams that would give you trivial satisfaction. And please talk yourself out of going after ephemeral rewards that would at best provide you with a false sense of accomplishment. Here's why this advice is even more important than usual: you have an intense but limited amount of driving ambition available to you at the moment, so you've got to make sure you use it on a project or projects that will still be meaningful to you a year from now. ▽

EVENTS
WEEKLY

FAX YOUR FREE LISTINGS TO 426.2889
OR E-MAIL GLENYS AT
LISTINGS@VUEWEEKLY.COM
DEADLINE IS FRIDAY AT 3 PM

CLUBS/LECTURES

ALBERTA CHILD WELL BEING RALLY Legislature Steps • Government policies and child poverty featuring speakers, music and new directions • Thu, Apr. 17 (11am)

ARTS EXTRAVAGANZA Expressionz Café, 20125-107 Ave (471-9125) • 1st Sat every month (11am-5pm) • Stroll through the Art Gallery, shop for unique gifts, listen to some live music, and enjoy the antics of STIRFRY Theatre

ARTS OUTREACH BIG BANDS MacEwan's Centre for the Arts (497-4303) • For musicians of all levels to play a variety of music • Tue or Wed (7:30-9:30pm)

AWA 12-STEP SUPPORT GROUP Braeside Presbyterian Church basement, N. door, 6 Bernard Dr, Bishop St, Sir Winston Churchill Ave, St. Albert • For adult children of alcoholic and dysfunctional families • Meet every Mon including holidays (7:30pm)

BEIJING OPERA SEMINAR/PRESENTATION Mulbart Hall of Alberta College • Apr. 16 (7pm) • \$5 (door)

BUDDHIST LECTURE ON MEANING OF "MYO" 2nd Fl, 10711-107 Ave (423-2813) • Mr. Masao Yokota will speak on the three meanings of the central Buddhist term "Myo" • Sun, Apr. 20 (1pm) • Free

EARTH DAY Hawrelak Park, www.earthday.ca • Music, environmental, social awareness and holistic booths, eco-displays, drumming, demonstrations, and circle dances • Sun, Apr. 20 (12-6pm) • Free

EDMONTON NATURE CLUB Royal Alberta Museum • Monthly meeting with Dr. Jocelyn Hudon speaking on *The Many Ways to Paint a Bird* • Fri, Apr. 18 (7pm)

ENERGY EFFICIENCY FOR EXISTING HOUSES Telus World of Science, Star Theatre, 11211-142 St, www.solaralberta.ca • A Super Insulated Retrofit, presentation by Harold Orr. Followed by the Solar Energy Society's annual meeting • Tue, Apr. 15 (7pm) • Free

FREE YOGA Lululemon Athletica Kingsway security entrance 2 (471-1200) • All levels welcome, new styles each week, mats provided • Every Sun (6-7pm)

FUTURE TUESDAYS Rm 129, U of A Education Bldg, 87 Ave (492-5055) • Michael Phair presents *Housing and Social Issues* • Tue, Apr. 15

GLOBAL WARMING SOLUTIONS Mayfield Inn • Discussion of possible solutions to global warming by science journalist, Jay Ingram; part of the ASET Career Resource Fair • Apr. 17

GOOD MEDICINE FILM SERIES: AWAY FROM HER Stanley A. Milner Library Theatre, Sir Churchill Sq • Film screening of Sarah Polley's film; question and answer session to follow • Sat, Apr. 12 (2-4:30pm) • Free

GREAT EXPEDITIONS HOSTEL TRAVEL SLIDE SCHEDULE Hostelling International, 10647-81 Ave (454-6216/455-6741) • Get together are held on the second Mon each month • African Safari-Kenya, Tanzania and Malawi (2007) presented by Sylvia Krogh, Alan Boyle, Dorothy and Bernie Keeler • Apr. 14 (7:30pm) • Free

IMAGES ALBERTA CAMERA CLUB Telus Field Club House, 10233-96 Ave, Gate 5 (469-9776/452-6224) • www.imagesab.ca • Meeting at Telus Field Club House on Apr. 10 • Will be relocating to the Pleasantview Community Hall, 10860-57 Ave for meetings in Apr. and May

JANE GOODALL Jubilee Auditorium, 11455-87 Ave (492-4817) • Lecture followed by book signing • Apr. 10 (7pm) • \$35 (adult)/\$25 (2nd balcony)/\$25 (student) at TicketMaster, 451-8000

KOSOVO FORUM U of A Ed. Bldg, North, Rm ED N2 115, 112-114 St, 87 Ave • The New World Order-International Law Need Not Apply • Thu, Apr. 10 (7pm) • Free, info e-mail: kosovoforum@yahoo.com

LIVE YOUR TRUE LIFE NOW Unity Church of Edmonton, 13210-106 Ave (913-6466) • Presentation by Christopher Moon on how to experience transformation, miracles, improving health, prosperity, and unconditional love • Thu, Apr. 10 (7-9pm)

PICTURE TIBET Robertson-Wesley United Church, 10209-123 St • Dinner, slide show, and live auction of framed photos from Tibet • Wed, Apr. 16 (6pm) • \$20 (Adult)/\$10 (Children 8 to 18) at Earth's General Store, Padmanadi Restaurant

PUBLIC DEBATE • On *Environmental Issues Surrounding Nuclear Power* with Patrick Moore (pro-nuclear), and Dr. Gordon Edwards (anti-nuclear) • Whitecourt Community Centre, Whitecourt, Fri, Apr. 18 (7pm) • Fort Assiniboine Legion Hall, Fort Assiniboine, Sat, Apr. 19 (7pm)

PROTEST THE SECURITY AND PROSPERITY PARTNERSHIP (SPP) Alberta Legislature, www.integratethis.ca • Sat, Apr. 19 (12pm)

SALUDY HEALTH CAB 229 Central Academic Bldg, U of A • Documentary film about conflicting values and the urgency of ensuring the universal right to health care • Fri, Apr. 11 (7pm) • Free

TEEN RETREAT TO HELP GRIEVING YOUNG

PEOPLE • Retreat for teens 13-18 years, presented by Pilgrims Hospice • Apr. 19-20 • Pre-register at 413-980, 309

THOUGHTFUL TUESDAY Steeps Tea Lounge, 11116-82 Ave (988-8105) • Film/documentary series featuring *King Corn* • Tue, Apr. 15 (7pm) • Free

TOURETTE SYNDROME Academy of King Edward, 8525-101 St, North door (1-866-824-9764) • Support meetings for TS adults and parents of TS kids • 1st Wed; until June (7pm)

VEGETARIANS OF ALBERTA Riverdale Community Hall, 9231-100 Ave • Monthly potluck dinner, bring a vegan, vegetarian or raw food dish for 8 people, and your own dishes and cutlery • Sun, Apr. 13 (5:30-7pm) • \$3 (member)/\$5 (non-member)

WOMEN IN BLACK In front of the Old Strathcona Farmers' Market • Silent vigil the 1st and 3rd Sat (10-11am) every month, stand in silence for a world without violence

QUEER LISTINGS

AFFIRM SUNNYBROOK-RED DEER Red Deer (403-347-6073) • Affirm welcome LGBTQ people and their friends, family, and allies, meet at Sunnybrook United Church the 2nd Tue (7pm) every month

BUDDY'S NITE CLUB 117258 Jasper Ave (488-7736) • Open nightly 9pm-3am, Fri 8pm-3pm • Sun: Rotating drag shows with Mz Bianca and Mz Vanity Fair in The Stardust Lounge and GoDiva and Donnatella NEI in The GoDonna Show, DJ WestCoastBabyDaddy • Mon: Amateur strip contest with Mia Fellow, midnight, DJ WestCoastBabyDaddy • Tue: Free pool and toumey, DJ Arrowchaser • Wed: Hump day with DJ Sexxy Sean • Thu: Wet underwear contest with Mia Fellow, midnight, DJ WestCoastBabyDaddy • Fri: We made 'em famous! DJ Eddy Toonflash, come early to avoid lineup, no cover before 10pm • Sat: Undie night for men only, free pool and toumey, DJ Arrowchaser

EDMONTON PRIME TIMERS (EPT) Unitarian Church of Edmonton, 10804-119 Street • A group of older gay men and their admirers who have common social interests meet the 2nd Sun (2:30pm) of most months for a social period, a short meeting and a guest speaker, discussion panel or a potluck supper. Special interest groups meet for other social activities throughout the month. email edmontonpt@yahoo.ca, www.primetimersvww.org/edmonton

EDMONTON RAINBOW BUSINESS ASSOCIATION www.edmontonriba.org • Monthly after business mixer: Network and share contacts in the GLBT business community • 2nd Wed every month

GLBT SPORTS AND RECREATION www.teamedmonton.ca • Women's Drop-In Recreational Badminton, Oliver School Gym, 10227-118 St (465-3620); Wed (6-7:30pm) • Bootcamp: St. Alphonsus, 11624-81 St; Mon (7-8pm); bootcamp@teamedmonton.ca • Bowling: Gateway Lanes, 100 3414 Gateway Blvd; Sat (5-7pm); bowling@teamedmonton.ca • Running: Sun, Tue, Thu; running@teamedmonton.ca • Swimming: NAIT pool, 11762-106 St; Tue (8-9pm), Thu (7:30-8:30pm); swimming@teamedmonton.ca • Volleyball: 101 Amiskwacy Academy, Municipal Airport Terminal just off Kingsway; Wed recreational (8-10pm); recvolleyball@teamedmonton.ca; Thu Intermediate; volleyball@teamedmonton.ca • YOGA (Hatha): Free Lion's Breath Yoga; every Sun (2-3:30pm); yoga@teamedmonton.ca

ILLUSIONS SOCIAL CLUB Floors, 10242-106 St (387-3343) • Crossdressers, transsexuals, friends and supporters meet 2nd Thu each month http://groups.yahoo.com/group/edmonton_illusions/

INSIDE/OUT U of A Campus • Campus-based organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-identified and queer (LGBTQ) faculty, graduate student, academic, straight allies and support staff • 3rd Thu every month (fall/winter terms): Speakers Series. Contact Kris (kwell@ualberta.ca)

LIVING POSITIVE 404, 10408-124 St, www.edmlivingpositive.ca (1-877-975-9448/488-5768) • Providing confidential peer support to people living with HIV • Tue (7-9pm): Support group • Daily drop-in, peer counselling

MADELINE SANAM FOUNDATION Faculty St, Jean, Rm 3-18 (490-7332) • Program for HIV-AIDS prevention, treatment and harm reduction in French, English and other African languages • 3rd and 4th Sat (9am-5pm) every month • Free (member)/\$10 (membership) • Pre-register

MAKING WAVES SWIMMING CLUB www.geocities.com/makingwaves_edm • Recreational and competitive swimming with coaching, beginners encouraged to participate. Socializing after practices • Every Tue, Thu

PFLAG Pride Centre, 9540-111 Ave • Support meeting for parents, families and friends of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people • 1st Tue (7pm) every month • Information phone Ruby at 436-1998 after 6pm, or edmontonab@pflagcanada.ca

PRIDE CENTRE OF EDMONTON 9540-111 Ave, www.pridecentreofedmonton.org (488-3234) • Open Tue-Fri 1pm-10pm, Sat 12-6:30pm • LGBT Seniors Drop-in. Social time for seniors of all genders to get together with tea and snacks; every Thu and Tue (1-4:30pm) • CA: Meet every Thu (7pm) • Womenspace. Board meeting 1st Sun every month (10:30am-12:30pm) • Youth Movie Night: Fri (6pm) • Suit Up and Show Up: AA big book study group; every Sat (12pm) • Youth Understanding Youth: Youth (up to 25 years) support and social group; every Sat (7-9pm) e-mail yuy@shaw.ca • Trans Education/Support Group: A place to come and be yourself. Support and education for Transsexual, Transgendered, Intersexed, Two-Spirited and questioning individuals at any point in transition; 1st and 3rd Sun every month (2-4pm); www.albertatrans.org • Men Talking with Pride: Men's social and discussion group facilitated by Rob Wells, robwells780@hotmail.com; every Sun (7pm) • HIV Support Group: 2nd Mon every month (7pm) • TT1Q Alliance: support meeting, Transgender, Transsexual, Intersex and Questioning, Education, Advocacy and Support for Men, Women and Youth; 2nd Tue every month (7:30pm) • PFLAG: A support and resource group for parents and friends of GLBT individuals; 1st Tue every month (7pm) • Youth Theatre Project:

Youth-led group addresses homophobia through theatre and a video project; every Wed (7pm). Email Emily@pridecentreofedmonton.org • YouthSpace: A safe and fun drop-in for LGBTQ youth (up to 25); Tue-Sat (3-7pm)

ROBERTSON-WESLEY UNITED CHURCH 10209-123 St (482-1587) www.rwuc.org • Soul OUTing: an LGBT-focused alternative worship • 3rd Sun every month (7pm); worship Sun (10:30am); people of all sexual orientations welcome. A LGBT monthly book club and a bi-monthly film night. Call for more info or email jravenscroft@rwuc.org

ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH 11526-76 Ave (436-1555) • People of all sexual orientations are welcome • Every Sun (10am worship)

WOODY'S 11723 Jasper Ave (488-6557) • Open Daily (noon) • Sat-Tue Karaoke with Tizzy and Patrick • Sat-Sun Pool Tournaments

SPECIAL EVENTS

JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL Royal Alberta Museum, 12845-102 Ave • Showing of films *West Bank Story* (G), *Ochberg's Orphans* (PG), *Sweet Mud* (14A), *The Forgotten Refugees* (PG), *Unsettled* (PG), and *She's Got It* (14A) • Sun, Apr. 13, and Tue, Apr. 15 • \$40 (pass for all 5 films) at TIX on the Square/\$10 (individual shows, door only)

CHANGING LIVES Royal Alberta Museum, 12845-102 Ave • Edzinkulu; A Society for Children of AIDS fundraiser featuring Memeza Africa, the voices of Soweto • Thu, Apr. 17 (6:30pm) • \$50

KARAOKE

BLIND PIG 32 St. Anne Street, St. Albert • Wed/Fri: Karaoke with Shelly

BILLY BOB'S SPORTS BAR Continental Inn, Stony Plain Rd (484-7751) • Wed (8pm-12am); Thu, Fri, Sat (9:30pm-1:30am); with Right Said Ed

CASTLEDOWN'S PUB 16753-100 St • Tue (9pm-1am); with Off-Key Entertainment

CHRISTOPHER'S PARTY PUB 37 Millbourne Rd • Tue (9pm) with Sonia/Prosound

CROWN AND ANCHOR 15277 Castledowns Rd (472-7696) • Thu (10:30pm) • Wed: Name that Tune

ECCO PUB 9605-66 Ave • Sat (9pm-1am)

GAS PUMP 10166-114 St (488-4841) • Tue (9:30pm): Gord's Best Live Singing Show

HAWKEYES TOO 10044-102 St (421-9898) • Fri, Sat (8pm-midnight); Hot Karaoke Productions

HOOLEGANZ PUB 10704-124 St (452-1168) • Fri: Karaoke with Krista, Liquid Entertainment

INGLEWOOD PUB 12402-118 Ave (451-1390) • Thu, Fri, Sat: Karaoke

JASPER PLACE HOTEL 15326 Stony Plain Rd (489-1906) • Mon (8pm-12am): Karaoke • Tue/Thu (1pm and 2-15pm): Bingo

KNIGHTS PUB SOUTH 19 Ave, 105 St (461-0587) • Sat (10pm-2am): Gord's Best Live Singing Show

LAMONT HOTEL • Last Fri every month (10pm-2am); with ProSound Productions

LIONSHEAD PUB Coast Terrace Inn, 4440 Gateway Blvd (431-5815) • Sun (8pm): With Evolution Entertainment

MAZADAR 10725-104 Ave (429-4940) • Fri (5pm-late); with Chris

MOJO'S Best Western Hotel, Fort Saskatchewan (998-7888) • Fri (9:30pm): with Sonia/Prosound Productions

MONA USA'S PUB 9606-118 Ave (477-7752) • Thu, Fri, Sat: sound and songs with great hosts

NEWCASTLE PUB 6108-90 Ave (490-1999) • Thu

NEW WEST HOTEL 15025-111 Ave • Sun (3-7pm)

NIKITA'S 10162-100A St (414-0606) • Tue, Thu (7pm-12am); with Shelley

O'CONNOR'S IRISH PUB 9013-88 Ave (469-8165) • Thu (9pm): Name that Tune

ON THE ROCKS 11740 Jasper Ave (482-4767) • Mon (9:30pm): with Wil Clark and Mr. Entertainment • Thu (9pm): Salsa Rocks with Guban salsa DJ

ORLANDO'S 1 15163-121 St (457-1649) • Wed, Thu, Sun (9:30pm-2am); with TLC Entertainment

OVERDRIVE NEIGHBOURHOOD PUB 6401-104 St (988-5457) • Sat (9pm): hosted by Jenny Joy

ROSARIOS 11715-108 Ave (447-4727) • Longest running Karaoke bar; 7 days a week

ROSIE'S BAR AND GRILL • Downtown, 10604-101 St (423-3499) • Mon-Sat (9pm); Sun (7pm); with Ruth • Highstreet, 10315-124 St (482-1600); daily (9:30pm) • Old Strathcona, 10475-80 Ave (439-7211); Thu-Sat (9:30pm-1:30am) • 99 St, 63 Ave; Thu-Sat (5pm-1am); with Off-Key Entertainment

ST. MICHAEL HOTEL • 1st Fri each month (9pm-1am); with ProSound Productions

SILVER MARTINI 10668-156 St • Every 2nd Sat (9pm-1am); with ProSound

SPORTSWORLD INLINE AND ROLLER SKATING DISCO 13710-104 St (472-6336) • Tue, Fri-Sat (7pm-midnight); Sat-Sun (1-5pm)

THORSBY HOTEL • Sat (9:30pm-1:30am); with ProSound Productions

TRANSIT HOTEL 12720 Fort Rd • Thu (7:30-11:30pm); with ProSound Productions

WILLY'S PUB 990 Lakeland Village, Sherwood Pk • Every 2nd Sat (9:30pm-1:30am)

X-WRECKS LOUNGE 9303-50 St • Wed (7:30-11:30pm); with Sonia/Prosound

YESTERDAY'S 112-205 Carnegie Dr, St. Albert (465-0295) • Thu (8:30pm-2am); with Off-Key Entertainment

Homo and happening in Calgary

LGBT

QUEERMONTON

TAMARA GORZALKA

tam@vuwweekly.com

It was last November when a bunch of my drag king friends from Calgary came up to the city to perform. The reaction from most Edmontonians they encountered—myself included—was weird; pleased, but shocked that Cowtown could sustain such a large troupe of performers. I spent a long time trying to figure out what was causing this response. We weren't accusing Calgary of being too homophobic to safely accommodate a gay scene, it just seemed shocking that there could be enough active queers to create a thriving community.

Which is silly, of course. We know that the more mainstream and conservative a population, the larger the need for counterculture. Was it really so hard to find gay organizations and businesses in Alberta's largest city? Since I was heading down there for Juno weekend to check out Tegan Quin in concert, now seemed as good a time as any to find out what's homo and happening in Calgary.

If Cowtown had a gay area, my guide informed me, 17th Avenue would be it. The queer bars and businesses are mostly concentrated in and around there, but are too spaced out to really call the neighbourhood identifiably queer.

One of the stores I most enjoyed visiting there was Priape, an almost-35-year-old Canadian gay retail chain. With sister shops in Montréal, Toronto and Vancouver, the Alberta location was third to open, making its debut in 2004. The store offers adult DVDs, clothing and a lot of unique sex toys for gay men. There I encountered the biggest speculum I'm sure I'll ever see, measuring almost as long as my arm. They also have a ton of good quality and reasonably priced leather products. Where else could one find a rainbow leather cod piece? They also had a dildo close to the size of a fire hydrant. I refuse to believe that anyone could fit that inside in part of their body. It must be for decoration, or so I will tell myself so that I can continue sleeping at night.

We asked the older gentlemen working at Priape what they thought of Calgary's queer scene. The men shrugged and smiled, saying they thought it was fine. It could always be bigger they said, but they were happy with its current state. One mentioned that he'd never had any problems with homophobic behaviour or vandalism towards the store, even with a very colourful display out front. He did note that it was the only business in the area that had a back door as well as a front entrance for anyone who still wasn't comfortable enough to come in through the street.

The clerks at Priape directed us to what they considered the female version of their store, a place just up the street called A Little More Interesting. The shop wasn't exactly what we had expected, as from what I could tell it was for women of any sexual orientation in need of adult items. The style of the store made it the least sleazy sex shop I ever seen. The open, sparse showroom looked more like a design office, with occasional colourful vibrators throughout. Why so many adult toys seem to be made in the shape of a cuddly little

worm or dolphin is something I doubt I'll ever understand. I appreciated the stores tidy aesthetic along with the fact that they seemed to carry only well-made and high-end products instead of cluttered aisles of cheap merchandise.

CALGARY'S VERSION of the Pride Centre is a place called Outlink. My tour guide told me that the organization still needs a lot of work, as they are not yet at the point of holding large events or being the community resource that Edmonton is so lucky to have. This is probably more a case of Edmonton's being especially awesome rather than Calgary's version lacking. A quick look at their website does reveal a range of different kinds of meetings and programs, but not a lot of parties or dances.

Apollo, Friends In Sports is the southern city's version of Team Edmonton, an organization dedicated to queer athletic pursuits. You might've heard about Alberta's gay rodeo, the Canadian Rockies International Rodeo, put on annually by the Alberta Rockies Gay Rodeo Association. The Imperial Sovereign Court of the Chinook Arch is Calgary's Imperial Court branch, a great fundraising group made up primarily of drag performers. The Calgary chapter is now in its 32nd year.

Cowtown had eight gay bars open at one time, but are down to five after three closed in the same year. I was able to visit Money Pennies for the first time, a wonderfully warm pub in a mildly sketchy area. So yeah, pretty much Prismo, but 300 kilometres south.

The scandals and gossip surrounding Calgary's gay bar scene could warrant a whole column unto itself. The juicy stuff mostly comes attached to Twisted Element, Calgary's only remaining gay dance club. I received the full story from my guide who mentioned repeatedly that she had to remain anonymous since so many members of Calgary's queer community have been banned and hassled by the establishment after speaking out against it. I'd rather not find out what a libel suit feels like, so get the story from your Calgarian friends instead.

Twisted, a huge, two-level space with tons of seating, multiple stages and a big dance floor, was fun. However, it's hard to enjoy walking into a bar, especially a gender-mixed queer one, that has a sign outside proclaiming a dress code in effect: no skirts, no heels. This only applies to straight girls, or women perceived to be straight, so queens and trans women are allowed, assuming they don't pass too well, of course, then they might get kicked out for confusing the bouncers. I was happy not to be charged (apparently I looked gay enough) since the bar has a policy to do everything possible to dissuade straight people from coming in. I've already talked about what happens when a gay bar discriminates, but the creeping, uncomfortable feeling I experienced that night was that it was kind of nice to not see droves of fag hags around every corner. I don't know what that means about me.

Calgary's queer community is doing a lot of things right and is similar to Edmonton's in a lot of ways. The only thing I did notice is that all the businesses are just a little bit more closeted than they are here: only the centre had a rainbow flag prominently displayed out front. I like my cheery pride colours just a little more readily displayed. ♥

ADS! CLASSIFIEDS

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DEADLINE IS NOON THE TUESDAY BEFORE PUBLICATION

AUDITIONS

Actors/musicians needed for TV pilot.
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DATING

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Asexuals are nothing to be worried about, as you'll see

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DEAR ANDREA:
I have a friend who claims to be asexual. Although women (and occasionally men) have expressed romantic interest in him, he never seems to want to pursue a physical relationship, or any kind of intimate relationship at all. He says he's quite happy. I'm confused—surely everybody has some level of sexuality? Or is there really an asexual community out there who are happy to be untouched? What do you know about this?

LOVE, A OK?
DEAR A:
Oh, lots. I wrote about asexuality a few years ago following a big cover story in *New Scientist* about it, in the course of

which I discovered that the movement's webmaster and spokesman, David Jay, was not only local to me but went to college with a very close friend of mine and so is practically family. So I know everything about it!

OK I don't, but I can answer questions. Most people (barring those rarities like last week's "man with no testosterone") may have "some level" of sexuality flickering away in there somewhere, but if that flame is sufficiently dim or sufficiently unappealing to the flickeree, he or she may choose to ignore it altogether. Some, though, have searched their psyches and failed to detect even the faintest flicker of interest, and they may feel fine about that. It seems to me that the most reasonable reaction to people who feel fine is to feel fine back, but asexuality remains kind of a hard sell. For whatever reason, many people—sexual people—find it hard to accept the idea that nobody is under any obligation either to feel desire or to act on

it. Most of us are accustomed both to wanting sex and to wanting to want sex. How can people have no desire to feel desire: aren't they broken? Don't they want to be fixed? Shouldn't they want to be fixed? If you take these sane, rational adults at their word, that word is no.

As I was procrastinating answering your question a friend mentioned she knew an asexual woman who'd been interviewed about it on TV, which led me to this YouTube clip: youtube.com/watch?v=CeKGOMUVU7g where you can see many of the asexuality movement's big names telling their stories and proudly proclaiming their lack of interest in getting in your pants. I can't promise that this clip or any of the others available online is any better than any other 4.5 minutes given a serious but potentially salacious subject on a typical TV magazine show. After the interviews the reporter turns to the camera and dutifully chirps, "Of course, some experts doubt even the existence of asexuality!" Of

course they do! There are experts who will appear on these shows doubting the existence of air if it gets them on TV. And then there's the odious sexologist Joy Davidson, who is wearing an awful lot of lipstick.

Presenter: Can labelling oneself asexual become a self-fulfilling prophecy?

Davidson: You might as well label yourself not curious, unadventurous, narrow-minded, blind to possibilities ... That's what happens when you label yourself as ... sexually neutered.

Well, they didn't label themselves that way, lady. You did. Davidson's insistence that people who don't want to have sex must be in some way damaged reminds me, irritatingly, of another well-known sex therapist I heard claiming that Viagra and friends cause as much damage to a relationship as they repair, and that if you really want to overcome erectile dysfunction you have to see a therapist. But Davidson is meaner.

So, yes, your friend is probably

telling the truth, and yes, there is such a community of "out" asexuals, albeit largely online but there's no shame in that. The one thing you're wrong about is the supposition that such people eschew intimacy of any sort. There are folks like that, of course, but we'd do better to call them "hermits." Asexuals have intense friendships and even romantic relationships. They identify, in many cases, as straight or gay, although it's hard not to imagine an asexual lesbian, for instance, as someone who's particularly interested in not having sex with women and you can get a little woozy thinking that way.

I do have to admit wondering whether asexuals like David Jay could possibly be having as much "fun" as they routinely claim. "We're having too much fun to have sex!" How much fun does anyone have, really, who isn't, say, a professional skateboarder or a four-year-old?

LOVE, ANDREA

MUSICIANS

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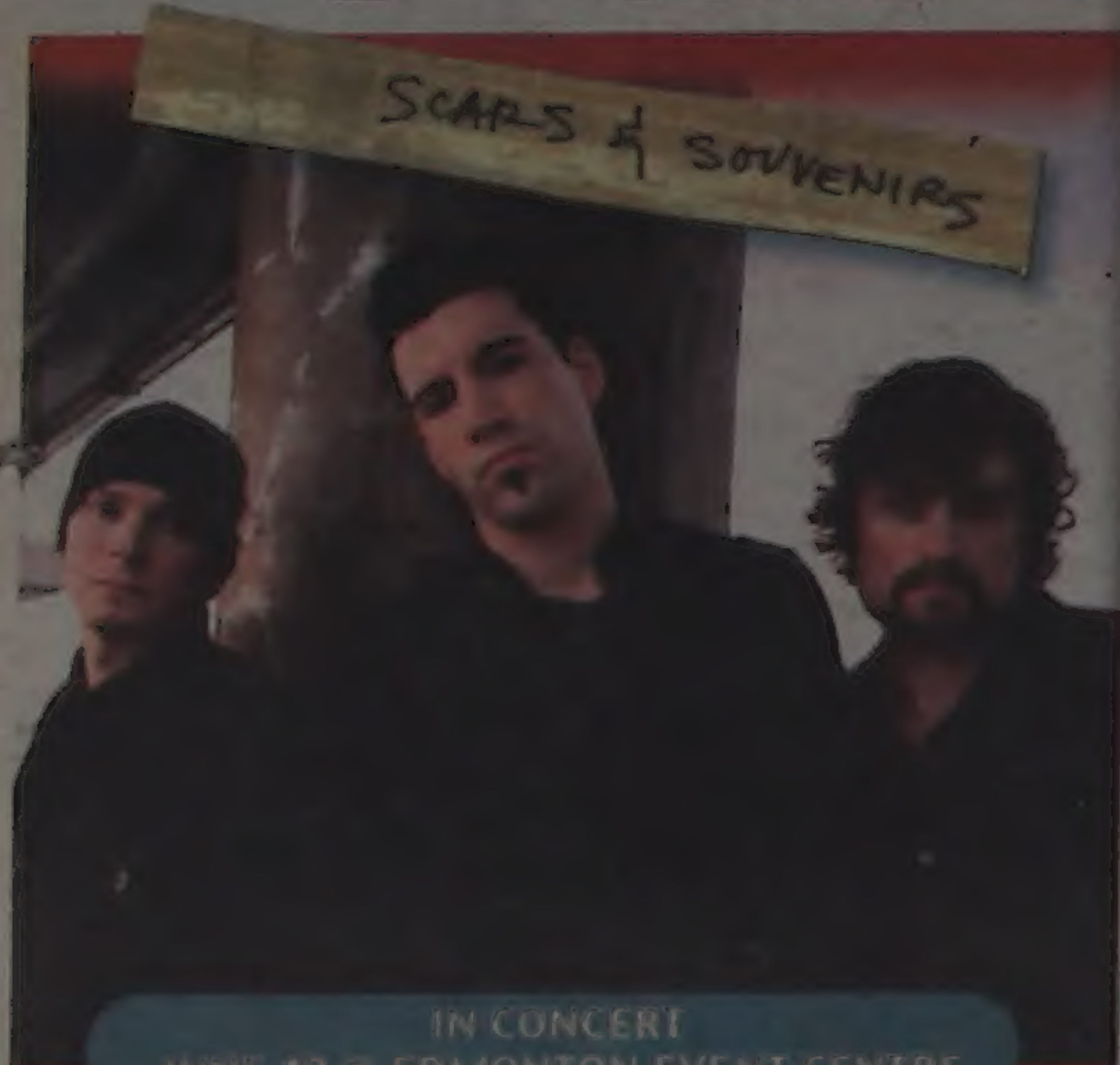
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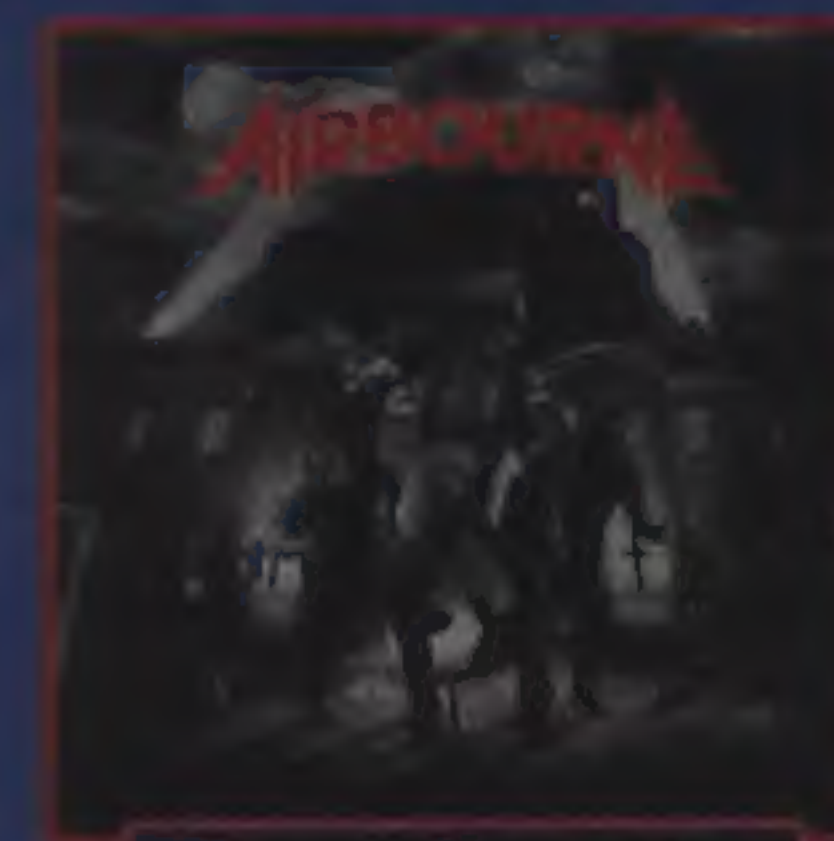
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